

# BLANCO

*Painting Situations: SIGFREDO CHACON AND LILIANA PORTER*



*Painting Situations:*

SIGFREDO CHACÓN AND LILIANA PORTER

Institute for Studies on Latin American Art  
Artist Seminar Initiative

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A bright red painting panel on the wall reads “AZUL” (blue). Close by, a small figurine of a woman sweeps up blue pigment from the floor. A second red painting panel reads “BLANCO” (white). Nearby, a figurine of an axe-wielding man chops white wood into splinters. The paintings belong to Sigfredo Chacón’s *Pinturasparlantes* (Speaking-paintings) series, and the figurines are part of Liliana Porter’s playful *Trabajo forzado* (*Forced Labor*) installations.

Despite their different visual languages, both artists’ works reflect on the nature of artistic labor. While differing in scale, medium, and format, the shared topics running through the works of Chacón and Porter are accentuated to such an extent that they appear to respond to each other. Indeed, the woman appears to be sweeping the blue color mentioned in one of the paintings, and the axe-wielding man seems to be tearing apart the white color alluded to in the other panel.

The connections between Chacón’s and Porter’s works illustrate how new ideas often spark only through first-hand encounters. This rationale underpins the ISLAA Artist Seminar Initiative, which makes such conversations possible and supports the broader fundamental relationship between theoretical training and the practical experience necessary for a comprehensive humanistic education.

ISLAA designed the Artist Seminar Initiative to support academic institutions like the University of Florida in fostering intimate exchanges between students and living artists, whose work and milieus are the subject of a two-semester program, including an artist seminar and exhibition.

The program aims to deepen students’ engagement with living Latin American artists and provide training opportunities in curation and public exhibition-making. Featured artists attend classes in a guest-teaching capacity, giving students rare insights into the creative and practical aspects of artistic production. Students then collaborate to curate and mount an art exhibition and draft the accompanying editorial component. Meetings among artists, professors, and students lay the groundwork for the exhibition, and the dialogues between the exhibition and the corresponding publication further explore the relationships between the artworks.

We are deeply thankful to Jesús Fuenmayor for leading the spring 2022 seminar for art history and museum studies students. We extend our most sincere gratitude to Kaira Cabañas for curating the exhibition alongside Jesús, as well as graduate students Helena Chen and Laura Colkitt for their curatorial contributions. Finally, we are immensely appreciative of the students who served as members of the curatorial advisory committee to the exhibition and who have contributed their thoughts to this publication. Thank you to all our colleagues at the University of Florida for illuminating these new and urgent paths for art education.

Ariel Aisiks  
President and Founder  
Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)

The School of Art + Art History (SA+AH) at the University of Florida is honored to partner with the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) through their Artist Seminar Initiative, which supports academic institutions in fostering intimate exchanges between students and living artists from Latin America.

We inaugurated our collaboration with the ISLAA Artist Seminar Initiative in spring 2022, when the graduate curatorial seminar led by Jesús Fuenmayor, director of the University Galleries, included the participation of renowned artists Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter. This was followed by exhibitions of Chacón's and Porter's work in two of our galleries. Curated by Fuenmayor in collaboration with Professor Kaira M. Cabañas, the exhibition *Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter* developed out of the seminar to take beautiful advantage of the space in our Gary R. Libby University Gallery. *Painting Situations* was complemented by a second, two-part exhibition—*Más Situaciones: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*, curated by doctoral candidates in art history Helena Chen and Laura Colkitt. *Más Situaciones* adds to On View: Curatorial Studies, a series of exhibitions curated by graduate students in the Gary R. Libby Focus Gallery. Colkitt's research for the exhibition will also directly feed her PhD thesis on Porter. Seminar students, including Amanda Álvarez, Korinne Casirella, Minji Ku, Leah Lester, Li Huixin, and Martha Whiteman, also served as members of the exhibition's curatorial advisory committee.

As the flagship university in a state profoundly engaged with the peoples and cultures of Latin America, we are thankful that ISLAA's support allows us to further enhance our commitment to Latin American art and to global art history more generally. In a location at a remove from the capitals of international art, we relish the opportunity for our students to work with living artists, especially ones of such sophistication and distinction.

In addition, the ISLAA initiative advances two important, student-centered projects of the SA+AH. The curatorial studies certificate, begun just a few years ago under the leadership of Professor Cabañas, offers graduate students important preprofessional training and a credential unavailable anywhere else in a state that is home to Miami, a key center for international contemporary art, especially the art of Latin America and its diaspora. Our partnership with ISLAA allows us to amplify the content and scope of our curatorial studies certificate curriculum. To complement that curriculum and other programs in the school, Fuenmayor is developing the University Galleries as a laboratory where students can participate in the lifecycle of the work of art—as artists who display their work, as curators who organize exhibitions, and as historians and critics who evaluate and articulate what they see. Together with ISLAA, we have new and potent opportunities to realize this vision for our students—and by extension the peoples and cultures of Florida.

Dr. Elizabeth Ross  
Director, School of Art + Art History  
Associate Professor of Art History



FIG. 1 *Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*, Gary R. Libby University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries.  
Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

## INTRODUCTION: *Painting Situations*

We are pleased to introduce *Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*, a volume that accompanies the eponymous exhibition showcasing the work of two pioneers of Latin American conceptualism: Sigfredo Chacón (b. 1950, Venezuela) and Liliana Porter (b. 1941, Argentina). As the exhibition curators, we chose to focus on Chacón's and Porter's emblematic projects: his *Pinturasparlantes* (Speaking-paintings) and her *Trabajo forzado* (*Forced Labor*) series. In doing so, the exhibition highlights how, despite each artist's deployment of radically different aesthetic strategies, the works on view share a common ambition. Each artist critically comments on the history of art, creating situations that call upon viewers' lived experiences and that invite attention to social contexts.

*Painting Situations* foregrounds Chacón's ongoing investigation into how the language of painting and speech derive from conventions that can be dismantled and reinvented. By exploiting the disjunctions between visual and verbal forms, Chacón's *Pinturasparlantes* work against the presumed autonomy, conventions, and purity of modernist painting. Chacón began to make his paintings "speak" in 1974, thereby simultaneously anthropomorphizing painting and complicating speech's communicative function. The exhibition includes three series from the *Pinturasparlantes*, two of which were remade for the Gainesville exhibition.

Porter's *Trabajo forzado* series (begun in 2003) shows fictional scenes of physically intensive labor—for example, cleaning, chopping—that exploit the discrepant scale between a miniature figurine and the size of a represented task. With blue sand (read: pigment) or a bladed instrument, Porter, who is known for her original work across multiple media, wields a subtle critique of Yves Klein's monochrome blue paintings and Lucio Fontana's slashed canvases, opening up mid-century modernism to broader consideration of how gender, class, and power intersect beyond a painting's frame.

The present volume presents extensive illustrations of the exhibition and the two-part parallel exhibition *Más Situaciones: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter* curated by Helen Chen and Laura Colkitt. It also includes conversations with the artists, who probe the thinking, materials, and concepts driving their work. We are grateful to both artists for their dedication and generosity (as well as humor) in making the exhibition and this publication possible. For the reader, we hope these pages reveal how Chacón and Porter each enable creative and conceptual engagements with "painting" as a situation in and of the world.

KAIRA M. CABAÑAS & JESÚS FUENMAYOR





FIG. 2. Sigfredo Chacón, *Pinturasparlantes, rojo* (Speaking-paintings, red), 1995/2022. Acrylic on wood. 6 × 20 ft. Detail. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.



FIG. 3. Liliana Porter, *Trabajo forzado* (*Forced Labor*) series: *The Great Task*, 2022. Figurine on white chopped wooden platform. Dimensions variable. Pedestal: 31.5 × 27.5 × 164 in. Detail. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

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**CONVERSATION WITH  
SIGFREDO CHACÓN - HELENA CHEN**

HELENA CHEN— When I was looking at your works without any background knowledge, I was reminded of certain concepts in graphic design, such as the “golden ratio,” text/image relationships, and so on (FIGS. 4-5).

SIGFREDO CHACÓN— Yes, that makes sense.

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**BACKGROUND**

HC— Then I found out you received your degrees in graphic design. Why did you choose to get your training in graphic design?

sc— I began my training as an artist when I was very young. I was fourteen years old, and at that time one could be in high school and pursue an art studies program simultaneously at the Cristóbal Rojas School of Fine Arts in Caracas. The building was located very close to the Museum of Fine Arts and the Ateneo de Caracas. The Ateneo programmed activities regularly and offered the public a library, theater, dance, cinema, literature, and painting exhibitions—in short, it was a successful and very well attended art and cultural center.

Since I had already been studying art for three years, and because I was not convinced by the art studies program, I learned that the Neumann-INCE Institute of Design in Caracas had been operating with a large group of professors of exceptional quality since 1964. I decided to enroll and start my studies there. My intention at the time was to have better mentors in my training as a visual artist. I finished my studies at the Institute of Design in 1970, understanding my studies there as an activity that structured me and gave me the necessary tools to investigate everything related to the creation and application of methods and

systems in an organized, rational manner. For me, these systems of thought and methodology could be perfectly used for creation and the visual arts.

Everything was a simultaneous process of understanding and analysis of the visual as a graphic designer and as an artist. Although the goals are different, the methodology and systems to produce a visual result—to make a book, a poster, or a work of art—are the same: in the end they are visual outcomes.

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**ART AND GRAPHIC DESIGN**

HC— There is a long and illustrious tradition in twentieth-century art of painters who are also graphic designers, including figures such as Josef Albers, László Moholy-Nagy, and Max Bill. How do you relate to that tradition?

sc— I am not so interested and well-versed on the history of the relationship between art and design. I am interested in their structural relationships. The way I relate to this tradition is through understanding that the arts and design are visual responses; the instruments to articulate them are the same. Design and the arts have many coincidences and relationships. Training in the field of design structured me and forced me to analyze the content I am dealing with at any particular moment. Another coincidence or common ground is semiotics, which has a big impact on my visual outcomes when I carry out design and art projects. I believe that creation is a task that can involve any type of experience, and any means or way of solving it is pertinent. Creating or inventing is our task and responsibility.

HC— More specifically in relation to Latin America and Venezuela, how do you relate to the work of Carlos Cruz-Diez’s generation or to other artist-designers such as Tomás Maldonado, Geraldo de Barros, and Eduardo Terrazas?

sc— For me, it’s not easy to differentiate between

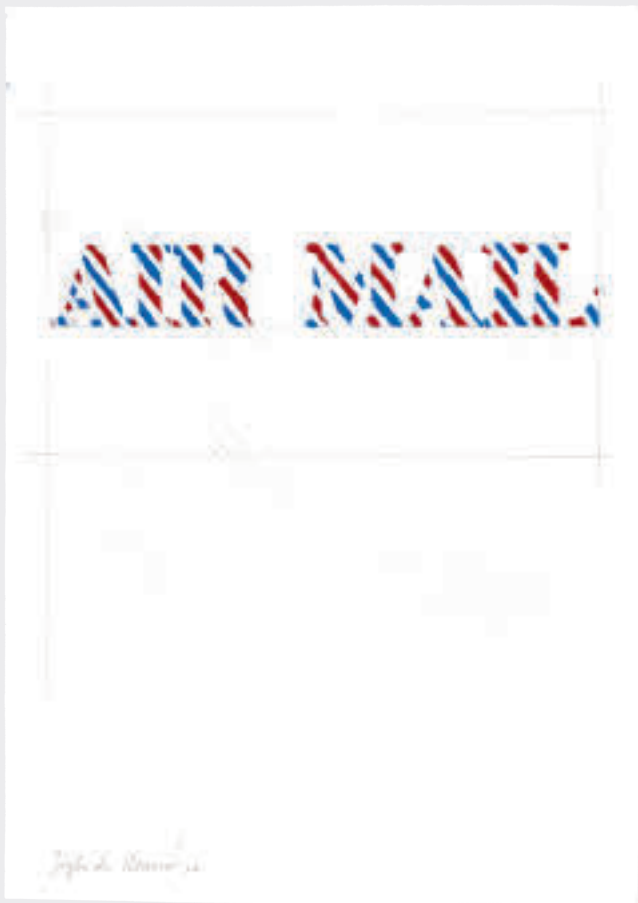


FIG. 4. Sigfredo Chacón, *The London Drawings* series: *Air Mail*, 1974. Crayon and graphite on paper. 15.5 × 11.7 in. Private collection. Courtesy of Henrique Faria Fine Art, New York. Photograph by Rodrigo Benavides.

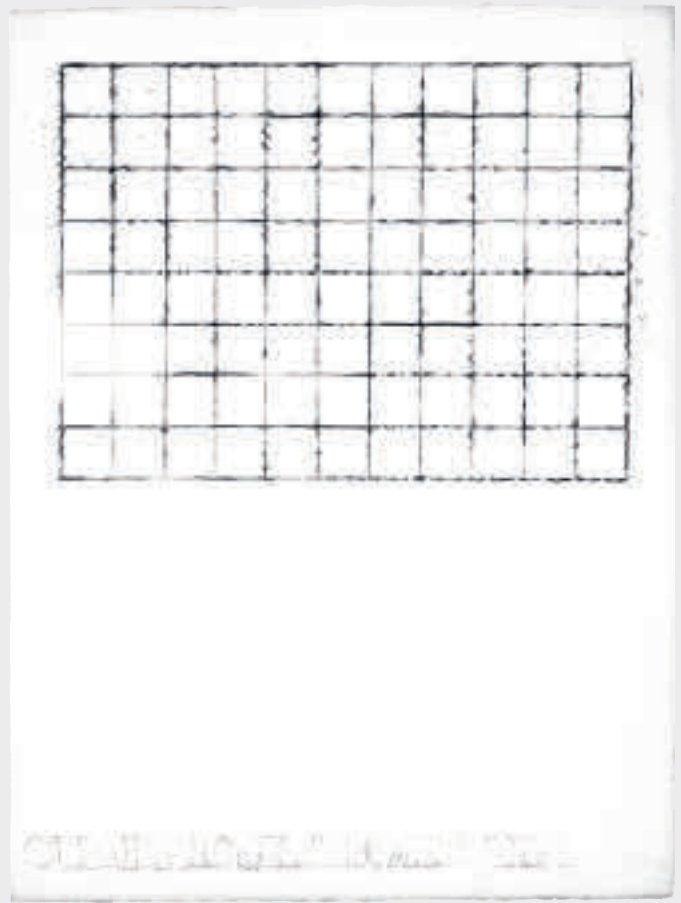


FIG. 5. Sigfredo Chacón, *Cuadrículaborrada* (Erased-grid), 1976. Graphite on paper. 17.2 × 20 in. Private collection. Courtesy of the Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive. Photograph by Carlos Germán Rojas.

graphic design and the visual arts. The creative processes for both contain many similarities, and the difference lies in the function, which determines the visual result. In Venezuela, graphic design as a profession began in 1964 with the founding of the Neumann-INCE Institute of Design. Before that some artists had assumed the profession of graphic designer, such as Pedro Ángel González, who designed packaging for commercial products. Upon the arrival of Larry June in 1946 to lead the American oil industry's local design efforts, Gerd Leufert, Nedo M.F., and Carlos Cruz-Diez began to develop graphic design as a specialized profession. At the same time, they were visual artists, and they developed both in parallel. For me it was very natural to see these two activities in the same manner, since they were notably executed by this group of artists who were our teachers. I have never differentiated between art and design, and I have developed both simultaneously with the same freedom and spirit.

#### MENTORS

HC— You were close to a group of artist-designers during the time you were in school studying graphic design. In an interview with Álvaro Sotillo you mention Gego (Gertrud Goldschmidt), Gerd Leufert, and Nedo M.F. as important references. Can you elaborate on how their research and oeuvre inspired your own work as an artist?

SC— I was a student and friend of Gego, Gerd Leufert, and Nedo M.F. They were a reference not only for me but also for a group of young artists whom they trained and supported unconditionally, including Eugenio Espinoza, Héctor Fuenmayor, Roberto Obregón, Álvaro Sotillo, Glenn Sujo, and Valerie Brathwaite, with whom they were always very close.

All of us are part of a generation taught by Venezuelan professors educated in Europe and the USA, or immigrant professionals who arrived from

Europe before, during, or at the end of the Second World War. They transmitted their knowledge to us and always supported us. They approached creation as a whole, without differentiating whether it was pure art, design, or works for architecture; everything became a creative and innovative experience. Freedom and excellence were what influenced me to understand the creative act as an act of reflection and contribution. I have always defended creativity as a free commitment without distinction of the final objective. In addition to those mentors, I must also mention Edward Wright, the head of the design department at the Chelsea School of Art, who was my mentor and with whom I had a close friendship. He influenced my training because, in addition to being a graphic designer, he was a painter, a concrete poet, and he introduced experimental typography to England.

HC— Were they role models for you? Do you see the relationship between your painting and your design as replicating this same relationship seen in the work of your professors? If not, how is it different? For example, is the particular way you deconstruct the grid in your paintings related to Gego's organic grid sculptures?

SC— You ask me where my relationship with Gego and the deconstruction of the grid come from. In my case, the grid comes from studying Renaissance artists and their use of the grid as a constructive tool, used mathematically to take care of the shapes and their proportions and to understand the use of space and scale. I would like to not refer to discourses on modernism; I prefer to mention the grid as an organizational method and its flexibility of use. I often use it as a leading element. In the case of my *Rejilla* [Grid] series (FIG. 6), I use the grid to contrast with the expressionist pictorial layer facing a minimalist structure, exploring this contradiction of concepts to create a new discourse.

I believe that art is born from art. The artist expands and continues the work of other artists.

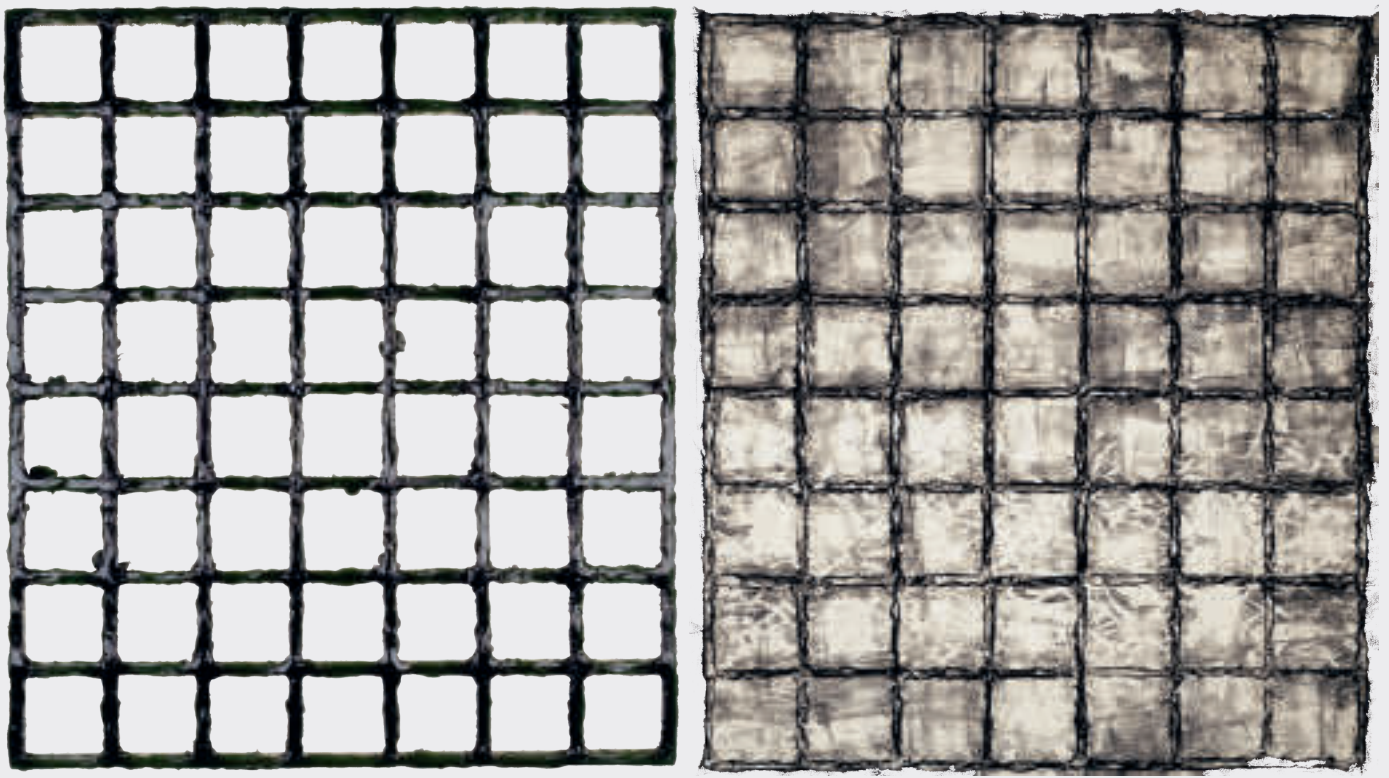


FIG. 6. Sigfredo Chacón, *Rejilla negro uno y Dibujo de rejilla* (Black grid one and grid drawing) diptych, 1993/1999. Acrylic on wood and frottage with lithographic ink on canvas. 63 × 55 in. each panel. Courtesy Colección Mercantil, Caracas. Photograph by Renato Donzelli.

Of course, I feel that my work is somehow related to my mentors from Venezuela and England. I feel privileged to be able to say that I am the heir to that way of understanding art and creation. Not only the aforementioned artists; I also carry with me artists from the history of art who have interested, excited, or moved me. They are in my baggage of visual experiences and are engraved on my retinas. Creation is a whole, and all these artists are already part of me. I grew up with them, I have always lived with them, I consider them my friends, as well as always thanking them for their teaching.

LONDON

HC— Your training in London seems to have been an important turning point. You moved there shortly after launching your career as an artist in 1972 with the exhibition *Situaciones* (Situations) at the Ateneo of Caracas (FIG. 7). And after returning from London to Venezuela in 1976, you almost abandoned painting and stopped exhibiting work for more than a decade. What prompted you to decide to go to London for another degree in graphic design when you were already a quite well-established artist in Venezuela?

sc— My decision to go to London to continue my design studies was because I felt the need to have professional training and go deeper into the field of design, especially because English graphic design schools and English graphic design in general were innovative and at the forefront in terms of excellence. In those years trying to make a living from art in Venezuela was a remote possibility. Design allowed me to take the time I needed to understand and clarify ideas regarding my practice as a visual artist without compromising my artistic research with pressures from the market or having to produce works for commercial purposes. Graphic design allowed me to have an independent professional career and a separate

commercial income to finance my research as a visual artist. In the early 1970s, I did not consider myself an established artist. Furthermore, our way of making art was never really valued or taken as a valid discourse in the local art community. We (the artists of my generation) were outside the conventions of making and displaying visual art. This was a time when kinetic art, geometric abstraction, and figurative expressionism were what was accepted by the public and critics.

We were a group of young artists with a common way of understanding artistic practice. Fifty years have already passed, and it is only now that our work from those years has been recognized in some way. Exhibitions I did such as *El autobús* (The bus) in 1971 (FIG. 8) and *Situaciones* (Situations) or Espinoza's *Impenetrable* (1972), plus the group shows *Accrochage* and *CCS-10: Venezuelan Art Today* (FIG. 9) (both 1992–1993), are now being reviewed and valued by national and international researchers and historians.

HC— How did your London experience affect your life and work in general?

sc— As you mention, my experience in London was fundamental. Living in Europe in those years—when there was a cultural explosion, music and the arts had been revitalized, society was questioning itself, all while I was studying at the Chelsea School of Art and the London College of Printing—was an important formative experience for me. Visiting museums and galleries, seeing important exhibitions in art centers—especially confronting the works of art that I admired—was a very important experience.



FIG. 7. Sigfredo Chacón, *Situaciones* (Situations), Ateneo de Caracas, Caracas, 1972. Exhibition view. Courtesy of the Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive. Photograph by Federico Reyna.



FIG. 8. Sigfredo Chacón, Ibrahim Nebreda, and William Stone, *El autobús* (The bus), Ateneo de Caracas, Caracas, 1971. Exhibition view. Courtesy of the Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive. Photograph by Angelina Capriles.



FIG. 9. Sigfredo Chacón, *Rejilla camuflajeada Dálmata* (Dalmation camouflage grid) and 18 bandejas (18 trays), *CCS-10: Arte venezolano actual* (CCS-10: Venezuelan Art Today), Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas, 1993. Exhibition view. Cinap Archive, Fundación Museos Nacionales, Caracas. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Ricardo Armas.





FIG. 10. *Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*, Gary R. Libby University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

FIG. 11. *Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*, Gary R. Libby University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

*Pinturasparlantes* (Speaking-paintings), 1995/2022

The mural-size monochrome paintings (red or black) that form the *Pinturasparlantes* series includes the name of one color on each of its five panels: *blanco* (white), *negro* (black), and the primaries *amarillo* (yellow), *azul* (blue), and *rojo* (red). The paintings not only “speak” what they are by naming the canvas’s painted color (red or black), but they also speak what they are not by naming colors not visually represented on the monochrome surfaces. These two monumental polyptychs, which were painted by Chacón at University Galleries (UG), are a partial reconstruction of work he first presented in his solo exhibition at the Museo Jacobo Borges in 1995 and that is currently in the collection of the Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas. By producing this version in relation to the specificity of the UG space, the artist allows the very materiality of painting to dissolve into a different kind of flatness, one that is “situated” within the architectural frame. Yet this flatness, a mid-century modernist ideal, is complicated by Chacón’s characteristic stenciling technique, which produces letters that are slightly raised through his use of thicker paint and its application.

SPEAKING-PAINTINGS

HC— Some viewers and critics could easily associate your *Pinturasparlantes* (Speaking-paintings) series (FIGS. 10–12) with a long tradition of monochrome painting, from Kazimir Malevich to Yves Klein. Were it not because of this exhibition, I would hardly make a connection between you and Liliana Porter. After seeing the exhibition, though, I understand the curatorial imagination at work. For you as an artist, what connects your works and Porter’s works?

SC— I met Liliana Porter in 1969 at an exhibition she held together with Luis Camnitzer at the Museum of Fine Arts in Caracas, which at that time was considered one of the most important museums in Latin America and was directed by Professor Miguel Arroyo. I was still a student. It is very interesting for me to see our works being shown together now. The word *situations* seems to capture what connects my work and that of Liliana Porter. We both work within that concept, or propose visual responses under this premise.

HC— With the *Pinturasparlantes*, you created several works on paper that belong to the *London Drawings* series (1974–1976) (FIGS. 12–13), which includes your earliest works in this direction, six of which are in the exhibition. Your *London Drawings* series is a very interesting group of works that covers a wide range of themes (e.g., found objects, writing drawings, color, erased drawings) and demonstrates your consideration and rethinking of multiple contemporary artists (e.g., Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns). How would you describe the motivation behind this series?

SC— The idea was to make notes for future developments. Because I was a student and had no idea of settling in London, I decided to jot down these ideas in a practical way. They were made as sketches on the same half-sheet format that was easy to transport, as was the case when



FIG. 12. Sigfredo Chacón, *The London Drawings* series: rojo (red), 1974. Acrylic on paper. 16.5 × 15.4 in. Private collection. Courtesy of the Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive. Photograph by Rodrigo Benavides.

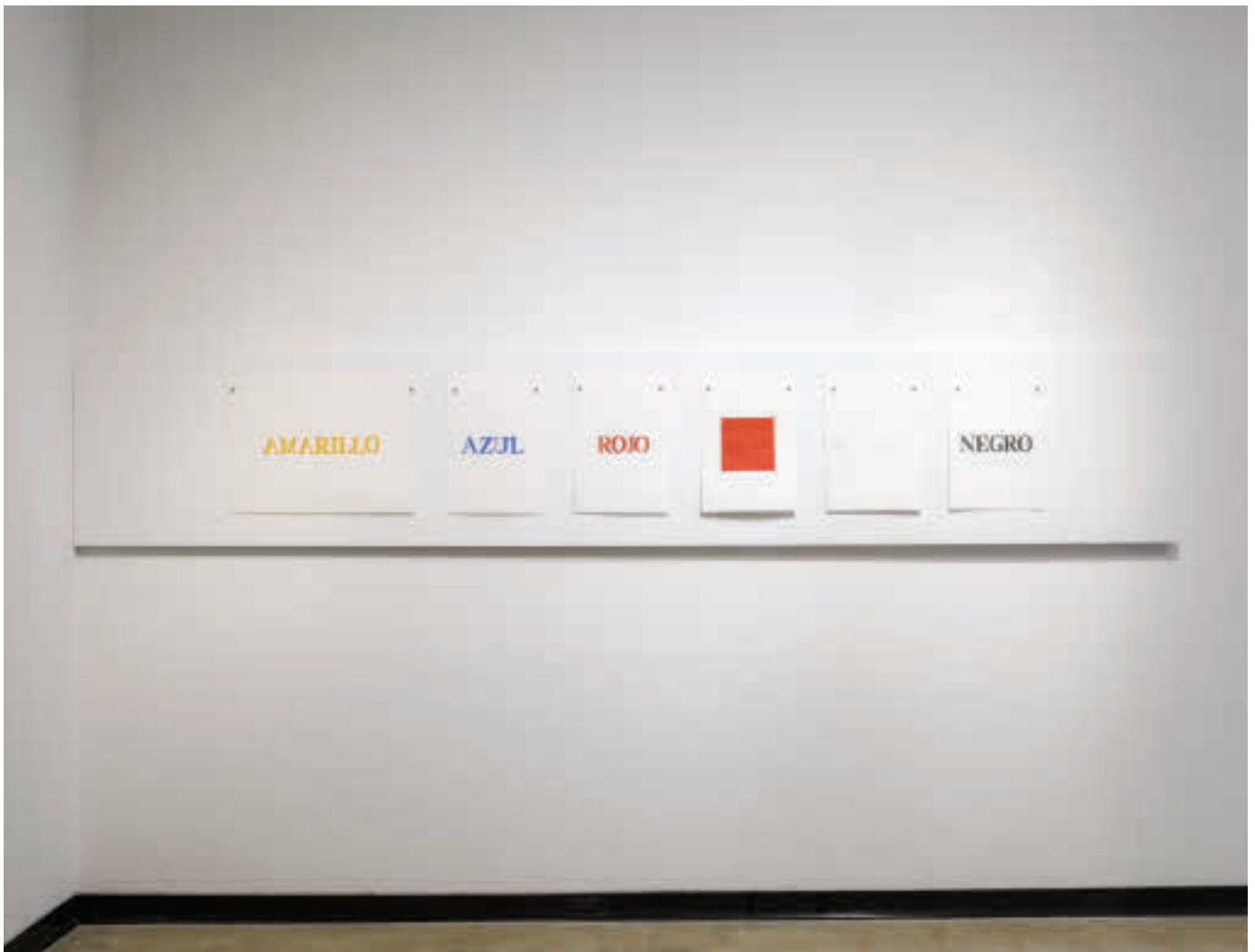


FIG. 13. *Painting Situations*: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter, Gary R. Libby University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

*The London Drawings* SERIES, 1974/2022

Fusing the textual and the pictorial, *The London Drawings* series is the artist's first attempt to explore the theme at the center of his later *Pinturasparlantes* (Speaking-paintings), in which he reconsiders the nature of painting as something that "speaks" through verbal and visual means. *The London Drawings* series is a project that the artist began when he was a graphic design student in London in the mid-1970s.

In their first iteration, the five works on white paper each present the name of a single color—*blanco* (white), *negro* (black), and the primaries *rojo* (red), *ocre* (ocher; in place of yellow), and *azul* (blue)—painted with a stenciled type, one of the characteristic features of the artist's work. Presented in capital letters and painted in acrylic in the colors they refer to, the words "speak out," replacing the pictorial images they signify. Due to their visible composition lines, the drawings create a sense of unfinishedness and calculated preciseness at the same time. An additional sixth work shows the text *rojo* (red) in a slightly raised form and painted on a red square. With its red on red, the work recalls the monochromes of the Russian historical avant-garde, including artists Kazimir Malevich and Alexander Rodchenko. For this exhibition the artist chose to present a reinterpretation of the original work from 1974. Instead of substituting yellow with ochre (a decision originally based on the length of the word), Chacón decided to present a proper yellow and paint the word *amarillo* (yellow) on a sheet of paper that is double the size of the original support.

I returned to Venezuela. I kept them to develop the ideas until I discovered precisely how to work with them. It took me about eight years to analyze and define how to begin to transform these ideas into more formal works. Around 1985 I began to concretize these ideas by working on a series of drawings that little by little became paintings; I was always investigating and trying to conceive of them as sketches, as works that are not definitive or finished. The unfinished work maintains its freshness and the possibility of being reworked later.

I believe that time decants the idea, and this process can be enriching. If the idea of 1974 can be clarified or made more precise and powerful, I have no qualms about taking it up again and redoing the corrections or making considerable improvements when the moment arrives. Some ideas are always alive and timeless. Artists like Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Marcel Duchamp, Piero Manzoni, Alberto Giacometti, Marisol Escobar, Robert Ryman, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Morris understand the visual fact as I have understood it. For that reason, I have been interested in these artists: they are akin to guardians and accomplices that are part of me and are embedded in my practice.

HC— Given how ideas from *The London Drawings* series developed into their “fuller forms” later, how do you view the series now? Are they “drafts” for your finished works? Are they “originals” for later “copies”? Are they archives that document your creative process? How has their status as works of art, in their own right, been altered by the more recent works they inspired? Do you think you can keep revisiting them in your current and future works?

sc— I like the way you catalog *The London Drawings* series as “originals to make later copies.” I think that observation is very accurate to how I feel about them. My work is always in a permanent feedback loop. There is a constant reflection. That

is one of the reasons I work with series: it’s like fine-tuning a musical instrument, being more and more precise about the concept to make it clearer until a point when the viewer understands the idea visually, that a single look could be enough to understand the work. That’s why I often resort to typography to reiterate or contradict the idea. I hope to continue working under this premise of reinvestigating my work as long as I find sufficient reasons for this reconsideration. Continual reflection is one of the characteristics of what I do.

HC— A few years after you restarted painting in the late 1980s, you created another series of *Pinturasparlantes*, which was exhibited at Museo Jacobo Borges, Caracas, in 1995 (FIG. 14). Why did you decide to paint again? Among all of the topics or directions your works had been going through, you picked up and developed two series in the early 1990s—the *Rejillas* and *Pinturasparlantes* series. Why did you think the “speaking painting” was a theme worth returning to?

sc— After I went back to Venezuela from London, I worked as a graphic designer in a museum for around ten years. In 1995 the Museo Borges invited me for an individual exhibition, which was organized by the curator Miguel Miguel García. My idea was to develop the series of *Pinturasparlantes*, which had been in storage since 1974. I developed twenty-five paintings using the chromatic circle of colors (yellow, blue, red, white, and black) as the theme of the show, and painting was the main medium. I also exhibited the series *London Drawings*; *Bandejas parlantes* (Speaking-trays; 1993); and *Bandejas* (Trays; 1995–1999), literally a series of paint trays in which I intervened. The idea of the show was to make painting the protagonist at a time when installation art was prevailing in Venezuela and postconceptual art was monopolizing the museums’ and galleries’ attention. That show was my response to the banal fashion of showing installations by a generation of emerging artists. I wanted to affirm that painting

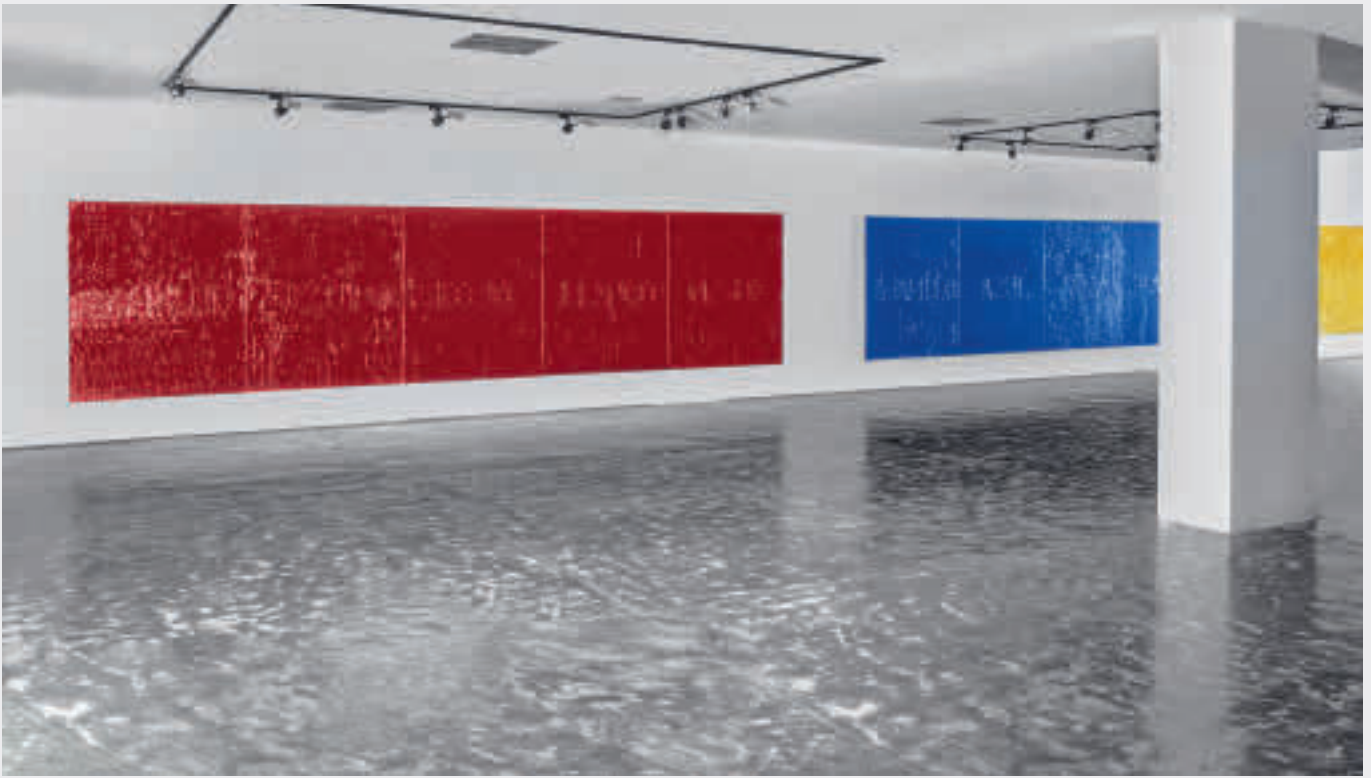


FIG. 14. Sigfredo Chacón: *Pinturas parlantes*, Museo Jacobo Borges, Caracas, 1995. Exhibition view. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Carlos Germán Rojas.

was a medium with currency. The key problem was how to turn painting into a contemporary issue. That's why I used different ways to show painting as a medium that could be adapted to different contexts and situations.

HC— In *Pinturasparlantes* (1995) and *Pinturasparlantes, segunda versión* (1974–2018) (FIGS. 15–16), you took *The London Drawings* series and turned it into large-scale polyptychs. While in *The London Drawings*, the stenciled capital letters were painted in the colors they refer to, the straightforward text/image relationship was complicated and distorted in the later series, where, for example, the red canvas says not only “red,” but also “blue,” “yellow,” “black,” and “white.” This reminds me of Magritte’s *Ceci n’est pas une pipe* (This is not a pipe), in which text and image are not reconfirming but contradicting each other. What prompted you to make these changes in your later versions of *Pinturasparlantes*?

sc— *The London Drawings* series from 1974 are notes or ideas that I decided to preserve. These ideas were transformed over time. For example, in the case of the *Pinturasparlantes*, even though they formally maintained the spirit of the original drawings, preserving all the material and visual solutions, they were semantically enriched by creating a disjunction between what you see and what you read. When writing the names of the colors on each of the twenty-five panels that constitute the painting, it reads “yellow,” “blue,” “red,” “white,” “black,” although each polyptych of five panels is monochrome. My intention was to transgress the meaning of the colors, opening a semantic game, so that the viewer reflects on the two opposing realities before them.

When making the series of twenty-five panels, I already knew exactly what the visual result of the works would be like, which would preserve the structural pictorial spirit that I was interested in maintaining. The show was in 1995, and at that time in Venezuela installation art was what was in



FIG. 15. Sigfredo Chacón, *Pinturasparlantes, segunda versión* (Speaking-paintings, second version), 1974–2018. Acrylic on canvas. Twenty-five panels, 18 × 18 in. each. Detail. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

FIG. 16. Sigfredo Chacón, *Pinturasparlantes, segunda versión* (Speaking-paintings, second version), 1974–2018. Acrylic on canvas. Twenty-five panels, 18 × 18 in. each. Courtesy of the Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive. Photograph by Bernardo Olmos.

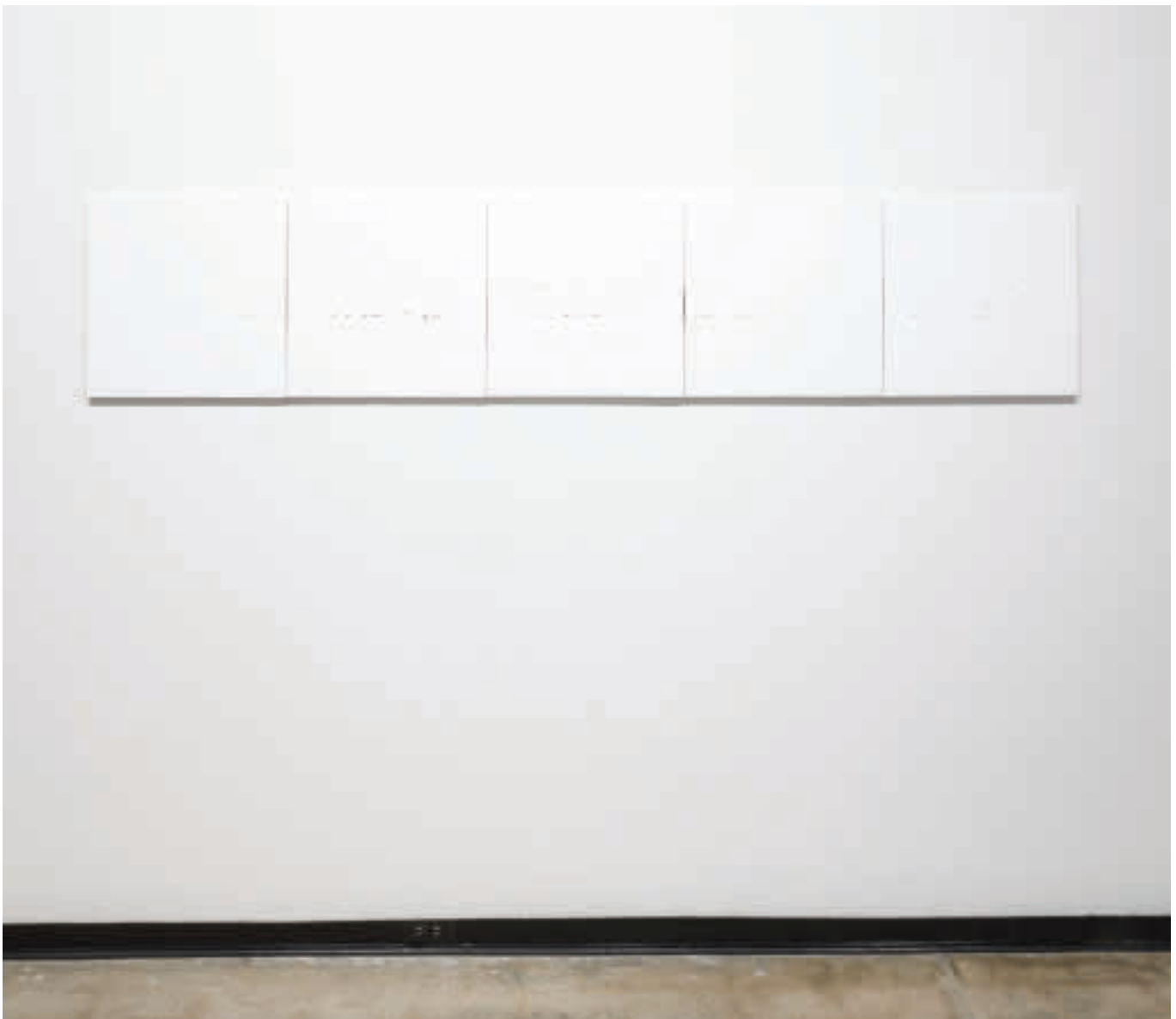


FIG. 17. Sigfredo Chacón, *Pinturasparlantes, segunda versión, blanco* (Speaking-paintings, second version, white), 1974/2018. Acrylic on canvas. 18 × 18 in. each. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

*Pinturasparlantes, segunda versión* (Speaking-paintings, second version), 1974/2018

In this second version of *Pinturasparlantes*—the artist’s third exploration of the idea of “speaking-paintings”—Chacón further explores the disjunctions between visual and verbal forms, highlighting the tension between text and color, language and perception, concept and reality. These ideas were first explored in the artist’s sketches for *The London Drawings* series (also on view). But with the second version of *Pinturasparlantes*, he challenges the straightforward text and image relationship of the earlier works. Here five white canvases are each inscribed with the name of a color. The white canvases speak not only *blanco* (white) but also *negro* (black) and the three traditional primaries of *rojo* (red), *azul* (blue), and *amarillo* (yellow). Chacón invites viewers to consider the arbitrariness of language, whereby text no longer functions in an explanatory or descriptive way in his painting but instead complicates visual perception.

vogue; painting was out-of-date. So I decided to be anachronic and antagonistic by keeping painting alive, respecting its foundations and meanings and challenging it from the inside.

HC— Can you elaborate on the choice of monochrome painting?

sc— The use of color in this series is based on the chromatic circle, which provides the range of primary colors that, when combined, produce the infinite existing chromatic range. The colors yellow, blue, red, white, and black are used as symbols of painting as a unique and representative emblem, as colors in their purest form of expression. I decided to paint monochrome panels so as to not have any disturbance or formal interference. They were clean planes of color free from any associations—outside of the color and text—that might distract the viewer, and the superficial texture recalls the pictorial matter and its history.

HC— This ambiguous text/image relationship is also evident in your later *Pinturaparadaltónicos* (Paintings for the color blind) series (2009–2012) (FIG. 18). In both the *Pinturasparlantes* (FIG. 19) and *Pinturaparadaltónicos*, you seem to maintain the opposition between text and image, but the two series are also very different. For example, in *Pinturasparlantes* (1995) and *Pinturasparlantes, segunda versión* (1974–2018), you reduced your canvases to very basic colors—a Mondrianesque palette. In *Pinturaparadaltónicos* you instead explored all of the possibilities of color: the secondary and tertiary colors, color in relation to space and weight, and so on. That is, while *Pinturasparlantes* is a

process of simplification, *Pinturaparadaltónicos* is about multiplication. Can you elaborate more on these two sets of works?

sc— In the case of *Pinturasparlantes*, my intention was to maintain the relationship or nonrelationship between color and its description in a semantic game of meanings. The purpose of the *Pinturaparadaltónicos* series is to confront parallel realities between people with this anatomical peculiarity and people with vision considered “normal.” As is known, the eye with color blindness perceives color ranges differently from the eye with normal standards of color perception. My interest was to highlight this peculiarity through a collaboration with my children, both of whom are color blind. With their help, I set out to investigate how they perceive color ranges. I was simply a translator between these two realities, choosing the easiest method to describe this visual phenomenon and comparing the different ways of perceiving colors. When coloring, my children used the color by reading the name printed on the colored crayon. Even when they see the color “green” as “brown” or “brownish,” they use the color “green” from memory, because they mentally know that the leaves of the tree are “green,” as seen by the normal eye. Simply using this method, I decided to classify a considerable number of colors and describe them typographically to be able to make the corresponding comparisons between the different ranges. The viewer would have a way to understand this whole process and compare the color ranges with each other.



FIG. 18. Sigfredo Chacón, *Pinturaparadaltónicos* series: *grisgrisgris* (Paintings for the color blind series: graygraygray), 2011. Acrylic on canvas. 7.9 × 68.9 in. Courtesy of the Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive. Photograph by Ricardo Jiménez and Ricardo Gómez.







FIG. 19. Sigfredo Chacón, *Pinturasparlantes, rojo* (Speaking-paintings, red), 1995/2022. Acrylic on wood. 6 × 20 ft. Detail. Courtesy University Galleries.  
Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

## SITES OF PRODUCTION

HC— Here in the University Galleries, you again recreated your *Pinturasparlantes* series and painted them on site. Each of the previous versions of *Pinturasparlantes* has been done in a different city. What does each of them tell viewers about the context in which they were made?

sc— In the case of the exhibition organized by the University Galleries, the concept is unchanged from the original version. Simply for assembly reasons we chose to pursue another execution of the idea, still staying true to the original. I understand painting as a form of living expression. The installation of *Pinturasparlantes* adapts to conditions with their own characteristics, and this is what is interesting. The idea is being adapted to a space with different characteristics than where it was shown in 1995. The idea is sufficiently flexible, but its foundation remains the same.

HC— In a previous conversation, you mentioned that you generally prefer to work simultaneously on two series. Currently you are busy with the series *Poverapaintings* and *Radicalpaintings*. That makes me wonder what “shadow series” you were creating together with the different versions of *Pinturasparlantes* at University Galleries?

sc— I certainly prefer to work simultaneously on two or three ideas, which usually turn into different series. An artwork or an idea is modified, mutating visually. Then I choose a strategy or system so that the idea of the series is executed as clearly as possible, where the visual prevails. My concepts are visual. I think of forms and images as something that can be assembled and concretized.

These ideas or series can be addressed or not. I am looking for a specific production system for each of the series. Each materialization system defines and enriches the work. From my point of view, the construction systems are key and allow for an idea to be clear and forceful.

In the *Pinturasparlantes* exhibition at the Borges Museum, I also showed the series of *Bandejas parlantes* and a series of *Bandejas* that I was producing at the same time that have a lot of resonance with each other.

HC— Around the same time you displayed *Pinturasparlantes, segunda versión* (1974–2018) in Miami, you did a second installation of *Situaciones* for the Miami Biennale (FIG. 20). That’s forty-six years after your first *Situaciones* at the Ateneo de Caracas. The original installation was a critique of both the social and political context in Venezuela and the dominant style of kinetic art in Venezuela, but I am more interested in learning about why you named the installation “situations”?

sc— I decided to call it *Situaciones* because the show was not planned in the traditional way of showing works, with a certain number of pieces distributed within a gallery, each with its own space. What I proposed then was to traverse the space, showing what I considered to be a single work, which went through all of the rooms where the exhibition was taking place. I wished to treat the exhibition space as a stretched canvas. Thinking of the visitor’s journey, I installed the objects without any conventional pictorial intervention. The canvases hung from the ceiling and the walls of the room, becoming simple fabrics that dialogued with each other. In the way they were shown, my intention was to immerse the visitor in a new experience of a spatial situation. I wanted the space to actively participate in the construction of the exhibition. In the case of the *Pinturasparlantes*, I decided to show a version of the exhibition held at the Museo Borges in 1995 as part of a project to participate in the UNTITLED Art Fair of 2018. I presented a group of works that would in some way transform the ideas made in *The London Drawings* series. My gallery owner and I thought it was important to show my work in perspective or retrospectively.

HC— This also leads us back to the title of this

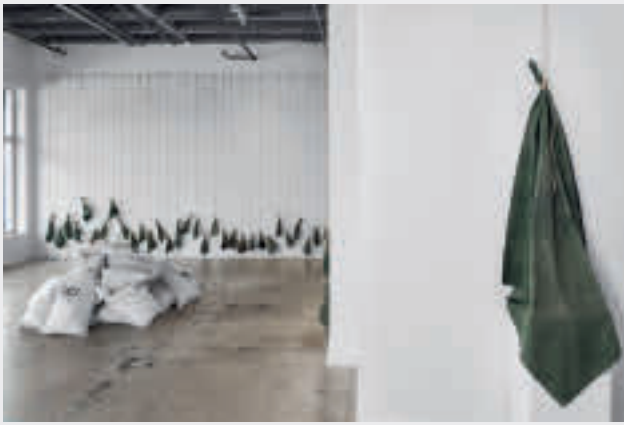


FIG. 20. Sigfredo Chacón: *Situaciones: Early Work, 1972–2018*, Miami Biennale, Miami, 2018. Exhibition view. Courtesy of the Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive. Photograph by Bernardo Olmos.



FIG. 21. Sigfredo Chacón, *Situaciones* (Situations), Ateneo de Caracas, Caracas, 1972. Exhibition view. Courtesy of the Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive. Photograph by Federico Reyna.

exhibition, “Painting Situations.” It plays on the word *situation*, which refers to the status of painting and also to a specific series of your work. How would you make a connection between the two series of works: *Situaciones* and *Pinturasparlantes*?

sc— The 1972 *Situaciones* corresponds to a situation specific to that historical moment. In that case, painting as a medium was not determinant. What was important was the general situation that surrounded us at that social, political, and cultural moment.

*Pinturasparlantes*, from 1995, corresponds to another political, social, and cultural moment, when painting as a means of expression was being underestimated. I decided to take painting as a medium that represents not only its historical value in the art world but also its cultural status; I tried to have it present not only a painted surface but to also show other possibilities in its content. Painting was not only the physical medium, but it was also a kind of semantic totality. With this I was doing exactly the opposite of what most artists did at that time, opposing painting to the antipictorial discourse.

nc— In the Miami installation of *Situaciones*, you changed the color of the canvases you hung on the gallery walls from unprimed canvas to military green. What prompted this shift?

sc— In 2018 I made the exhibition *Sigfredo Chacón Situaciones, Early Work 1972–2018* in the space known as the Miami Biennale. For this show I reenvisioned the one made in Caracas in 1972 (FIG. 21). In my country the sociopolitical realities had changed radically, and I decided to reflect those realities in the show by changing the grayish tone of the original fabric for the greenish one. On the one hand, I wanted to make an association with the color used by the army; on the other hand, I wanted to test the current validity of the installation. It was the reconstruction of an idea, enriching and updating it, while maintaining the original visual system used in 1972.

BERLIN AND THE *fornowpaintings* SERIES

HC— Since the *Berlinpaintings* (2012–2018) (FIG. 22), it seems that you have begun to allow politics and history to inflect your work. What changed?

sc— The *Berlinpaintings* were made after a trip to Berlin in 2012, where I had the opportunity to visit Sachsenhausen, the former Nazi concentration camp in Oranienburg. Gray is the predominant color of the series, as it is also that of the concentration camp. Everything I painted in the *Berlinpaintings* series was in Sachsenhausen—the floor, the houses, the texture. I just took the reality and painted, because it was there. I think I was very sensitized because, as you know, there is a communist regime in Venezuela, and we know very well how this way of life feels like. The experience at Sachsenhausen touched me, because I felt the same sensation I associate with my country: without freedom. It moved me very much. Departing from this experience, I said to myself that I had to create something about my reality and about my life. When I went to Berlin in 2012, I was still living in Venezuela, and I was suffering from the regime. At Sachsenhausen, I was very impressed with the color of everything. I remember it was autumn, September. I started thinking about the testimony of living without freedom. I started to write down some ideas, and I studied intensively about World War II and the Holocaust. It was for me very important to do it.

HC— So, in a way, that experience in Berlin, coupled with your own experience of an authoritarian regime, informed a political turn in your work and the development, for example, of the *Fornowpainting* series (2018–2019) (FIG. 23). In *Más Situaciones II: Sigfredo Chacón* (FIGS. 24–25), I included three works from the series. Can you tell me more about the relationship between this series and your 2018 *Situaciones*?



FIG. 22. Sigfredo Chacón, *Berlinpaintings* / *Alfabeto del silencio* series: *Berlin* (Berlinpaintings / Alphabet of silence series: Berlin), 2017. Acrylic on canvas. 24 × 24 in. Courtesy of Sigfredo Chacón Art Foundation Archive.  
Photograph by Ricardo Jiménez and Ricardo Gómez.



FIG. 23. *Más Situaciones II*: Sigfredo Chacón, Gary R. Libby Focus University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022 (with view of Chacón's *Fornowpainting* series *Moments*, *People*, and *Invader*, 2018–2019. Acrylic and crayon on canvas. 30.125 × 30.125 in. each). Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

sc— The *Fornowpainting* series was actually inspired by the 2018 *Situaciones* installation. When I was working with my exhibition *Situaciones* in Miami, I created the “canvas-collage” technique and used this technique for the *Fornowpainting* series. I thought it was time for me to do something related to my reality. But when I was working on the *Situaciones* exhibition, I didn’t know how to do it. I decided to do the *Fornowpainting* series with the technique of canvas-collage (pieces of canvases that were stitched together), because it was perfect and it had the same feeling as the *Situaciones*. I also thought about using the canvas-collage technique to do something with the new concept I developed for the *Berlinpaintings*.

As you can see in the exhibition, the *Fornowpainting* series is painted in military green, with perpendicular red lines arranged into crosshair patterns, alluding to the visual rhetoric of authoritarianism in Venezuela. The typeface I used for these paintings was also commonly used in the army, in the military world. The canvas-collage technique conjures the kind of tent used in the military. The color is the uniform (I didn’t want to do camouflage because it has been done already). I have around fifty paintings in this series.

HC— Thank you, Sigfredo, for answering my questions and taking us through your thinking and motivations for your work.

sc— A pleasure. Thank you.

This conversation was originally a written exchange and has been edited for clarity and length.



FIG. 24. *Más Situaciones II*: Sigfredo Chacón, Gary R. Libby Focus University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

FIG. 25 Sigfredo Chacón, *Situaciones* (Situations) series, 1972/2018. Mixed media. Dimensions variable. Detail. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.





FIG. 26. *Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*, Gary R. Libby University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

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**CONVERSATION WITH  
LILIANA PORTER — LAURA COLKITT**

LAURA COLKITT— Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me. We are very excited about the exhibition (FIG. 26).

LILIANA PORTER— Wonderful, me too.

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**BACKGROUND**

LC— Before delving into the works in *Painting Situations*, can you tell me a little bit about what excites you most about art making and some of the challenges you face?

LP— Well, I grew up in a family of artists. My father was a writer and a movie maker. My mother was a poet and later in life a printmaker. So, art was always in the air. I think I was the first one to go into fine arts. I think it was a natural thing to be interested in art. At home there were often poetry readings and conversations about literature. I don't remember thinking, "I want to be an artist." But I did go to fine arts school.

LC— It was a general art atmosphere . . .

LP— Exactly.

LC— What are some of the challenges you continually face, given that your career has been so long and that to constantly produce art seems like it would be a challenge?

LP— I have been lucky. Since I was a child starting to do art, my parents, everybody, were very supportive. My brother especially. When I was sixteen years old, my family moved from Buenos Aires to Mexico City. I was going to a printmaking workshop there, and one day my professor said, "You are going to make a solo show. I reserved a space for you." It was in a very good gallery in Mexico. So, my first show, when I was a seventeen,

was organized by somebody else (FIG. 27). Things were happening before I really thought of them. I had a great deal of support and many great opportunities to show in wonderful places with interesting people. I have no complaints.

LC— You were saying that your brother was especially supportive.

LP— My brother now is an architect and a writer. He is three years older than me. We were always very close, so he is always very supportive of me.

LC— In *Liliana Porter in Conversation with Inés Katzenstein* I read a lot about your parents, so it's interesting hearing about your brother and how he influenced you. Your art-making history is certainly complex, but to start: printmaking was the original jumping-off point for you?

LP— When I lived in Mexico City, I attended the Universidad Iberoamericana. It had a small printmaking workshop directed by the Colombian artist Guillermo Silva Santamaria. It was almost empty—because the other girls didn't want to get their fingernails ruined with printing ink!—so I took advantage of the situation. We were very few students in that studio, and the professor produced his own prints there. I learned a lot very fast!

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**Forced Labor SERIES**

LC— The curators of *Painting Situations*, Kaira Cabañas and Jesús Fuenmayor, chose two works: *The Great Task* (See FIG. 39) and *To Clean Up Again* (FIGS. 29–30). Could you speak to the importance of scale in these works? What led you to the idea of using small figurines in almost life-like situations (FIG. 28)?

LP— Well, in many of my works there is a confrontation between some very small characters and enormous tasks. One of the tasks could be to untangle a group of complicated intertwined ropes



FIG. 28. Liliana Porter, *Black Drip*, 2009. Mixed media. Dimensions variable. Figure and sphere, 4.5 inches high. Detail. Jesús Egea Collection, Murcia, Spain. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Liliana Porter



FIG. 27. Liliana Porter and Juan José Arreola during Porter's first exhibition, Mexico City, 1958. Courtesy of the artist. Photographer unknown.

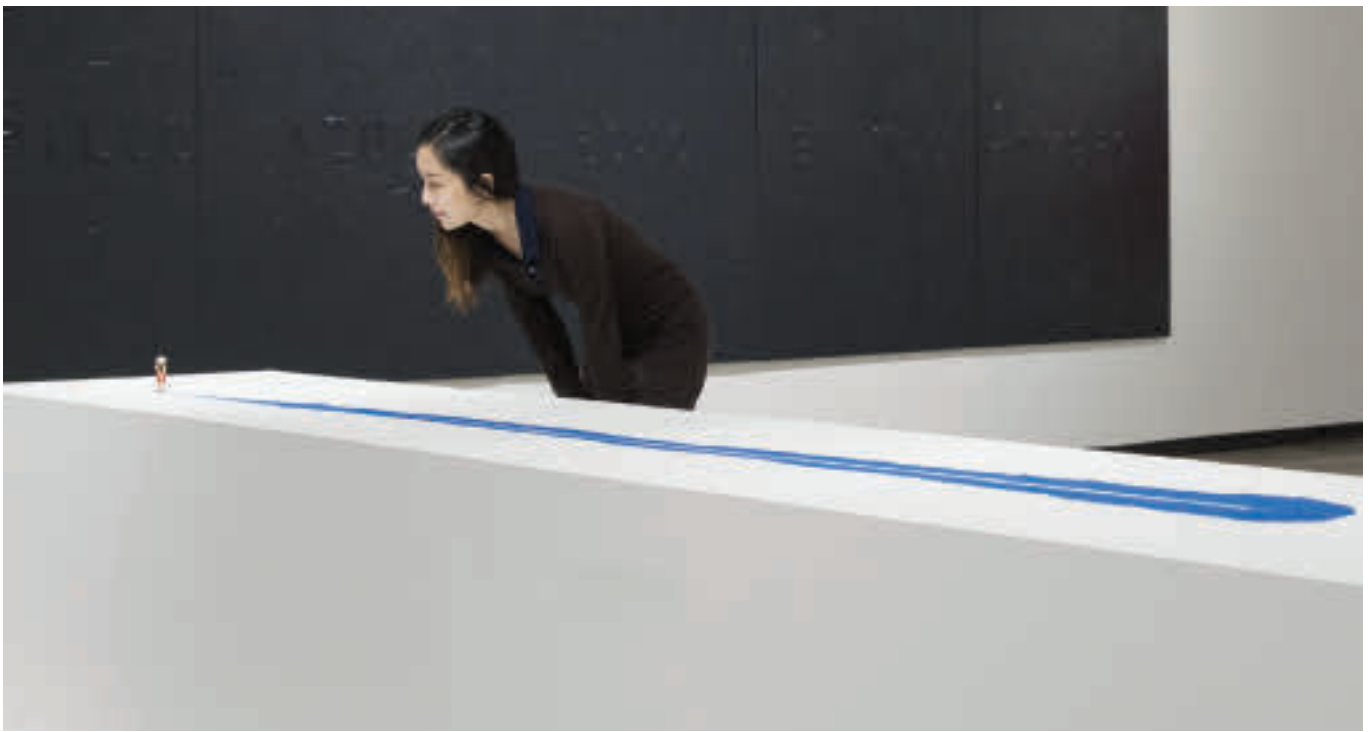


FIG. 29. *Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*, Gary R. Libby University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

FIG. 30. *Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*, Gary R. Libby University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

or to sweep a large area full of dirt. These situations act as metaphors: we are confronted with questions for which we do not know the answer. First, we try to understand who we are or what we are doing in this world, which in itself is a search bigger than our possibilities of understanding. I call these series “*Forced Labor*” (FIG. 33) because they depict something that is beyond our possibilities.

LC— This idea of being forced: where do you see the word *force*? Who is the one imploring the action? How does it work?

LP— Because you have no way out. Forced labor is something you must do. You must come to terms with your own reality no matter what. Even if you ignore it, it’s your decision. I think you are forced to come to some kind of . . . answer, just for yourself.

LC— It almost gives these figures agency, but it’s also that this task is imposed upon them to finish?

LP— Right! They have to sweep the enormous thing.

LC— We are in your studio now (FIG. 32). We can see a lot of found figurines, and we talked about how you found these at flea markets and have been collecting them. For the works in *Painting Situations—The Great Task* and *To Clean Up Again*—did you design the figurines yourself? Or are they also found objects?

LP— They are always found objects. Not only that, but in general I don’t touch them or paint them over or anything. They are just like that.

LC— Could you speak to that process of finding and collecting—especially these working figurines.

LP— I find many of them in flea markets. Also, there is a German producer, Preiser, that makes these incredible figurines in different scales from super small—like incredibly small—to bigger scale. I think people use them for maquettes. Also, there are people who collect electric trains and make dioramas. These figurines are fascinating because



FIG. 31. Liliana Porter: *Dialogues and Disobediences*, Artium, Vitoria, Spain, 2017. Exhibition view. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Gert Voor int'l Holt.

FIG. 32. View of Liliana Porter’s studio, Rhinebeck, New York, 2020. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Jarrett Christian.



FIG. 33. Liliana Porter, *Trabajo forzado (Forced Labor)* series: *To Clean Up Again*, 2022. Figurine and sand on white platform. Dimensions variable. Pedestal: 31.5 × 27.5 × 164 in. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

*To Clean Up Again*, 2022

*To Clean Up Again* shows a small figurine of a blonde woman with long braids who is dressed in a black tank top, red skirt, and sun hat. The figurine holds a rake and is poised to clean up the disproportionately immense field of blue sand laid out before her. The placement of the sand on the platform suggests a brushstroke of blue paint. In this way, viewers are led to consider Porter's subtle critique of French neo-avant-garde painter Yves Klein's blue monochromes, a series he produced using his patented International Klein Blue. In contrast to Klein's view of his monochrome production as a mythic conquest of artistic freedom, Porter's scene critically comments on the labor of painting while also summoning questions of gender, class, and power within and beyond painting.

you can find anything you need: woman ironing, man painting the roof, whatever! It's a cast. I use them as a cast. There's something theatrical about the creation of those *situations*.

LC— When you're coming across these figurines or you're looking in a catalog, is that process what leads you to these ideas, to these situations? Or do you come up with the idea and look for something along those lines? Or is it both?

LP— It's both, because sometimes I make very different versions of the same idea. If I already made a version, I may look for a specific action. But sometimes the object gives you the idea for the work. It's interesting because, when I return from a visit to a flea market and I place the things I bought on the table, they look like they were mine from the beginning. They are so similar to my [visual] vocabulary that it's more than me recovering them; it's like they were waiting for me to do so.

LC— Like they are calling to you?

LP— Yes, exactly. You know exactly what is a yes or a no. You may go with somebody [to the flea market] who wants to help you. And they may say, "Oh! Look at this!" And then I say, "No." But it's difficult to explain why not or why yes. It's something you just recognize. You feel some clear empathy.

LC— That makes a lot of sense. That's maybe why they are so impactful for the viewer, too, because they see these little figures doing these tasks and each of them is just powerful when you're looking at it.

LP— It's true, it's true!

#### CHANCE CONNECTIONS

LC— I want to talk a little bit about this idea of chance. There's chance in collecting the figurines, and there's chance in creating the work in such a way that the viewer can see that it's a little bit

different in each iteration. Chance seems to be an almost structural force in the configuration of your works.

LP— Yes, because, for example, when I do a painting I may use a bucket of acrylic paint mixed with gel medium, and I may throw it on the canvas in one rapid gesture. There is no way to know exactly how it's going to fall over the canvas. It's like working with somebody else, because things happen with a result that one may like, but there is not too much control. It's the same when I use colored sand. Sometimes you pour it a certain way, but you have limited control, you don't know how exactly it's going to end. There are surprises with chance. You have a concept, but things happen with the material that may lead to other ideas. (FIG. 34)

LC— In your works from this series, you seem to anthropomorphize or humanize found objects, given their placement and the evocation of labor. Do you want viewers to have a sense of connection with these chosen objects?

LP— I think that you may have a connection or not, because sometimes you see things you are not interested in and you don't connect. But some viewers may connect because the subject that they touch on is universal, no? They are not complicated works; I think they are very easy to understand. I hope they are easy to understand.

LC— I'm thinking of the Museo del Barrio exhibition and the children who were there interacting with the little figurines and watching them do so. . .

LP— They understand because the works are metaphors that they themselves may have done. It's not something very far from their thinking.

LC— Do you think the situations that the figurines find themselves in might also be a prompt to worry about situations in the world?

LP— It's interesting. You do things but don't really



FIG. 34. Liliana Porter, *The Man with an Axe and Other Brief Situations—Venice*, 2017. Mixed media. Dimensions variable. Detail. Pérez Art Museum Miami Collection. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Liliana Porter.



know why, but they always relate to your context. And so suddenly I realized I was doing many paintings about war. It seems that it has to do with everything we see all the time on TV, the news . . .

LC— Is the human dimension represented by the figurines something that you want to include in the debate about the series? Would you like that to be something that viewers take away from it? That they use to contextualize it?

LP— Yes, I think they should act as metaphors of realities.

LC— What was the original motivating factor for the *Forced Labor* series?

LP— The year I started was 2003, at the Espacio Minimo Gallery in Spain. The work consisted of a small figurine shoveling earth from a shelf to the floor. At the time, I really liked that idea of the smallness of the creature confronted by a big task and that you can repeat it forever in different situations with different materials. It's what I did for years! Starting almost twenty years ago!

LC— Speaking about how you can do them forever: What made you decide to give the figurines physically intensive tasks? Did you want the tasks to be based on labor, physical labor, versus some other aspect of internal . . .

LP— Intellectual?

LC— Yes.

LP— Hmm. What happened is it's more difficult to show someone's thinking.

LC— So, given that, what motivates you to focus on certain types of labor? Is the labor you choose ever exhibition specific? I loved the painter in the Museo del Barrio (FIG. 35), where he was the driving force between painting the beginning part where it's white and then all of a sudden out of the corner of your eye you see that he was the reason the rest of the exhibition is blue.

LP— Being a visual artist, the choices come from

the possibility of solutions that visually work, formally work.

LC— So how did the idea for that specific labor and taking over the wall come about?

LP— The situation was a figurine that was making a scribble on the wall. Then I realized that he could also paint. Then, if he would paint a little bit, I realized that he could paint the whole room. I have made many versions of those painters working in different contexts.

#### MATERIALS AND GENDER

LC— You've chosen a lot of different labors. Are there any more that you are thinking about exploring?

LP— They will appear. Sometimes you see some materials and say, "Wow, these would be good." For instance, I did many versions of *The Weaver* (FIGS. 36–37). Recently, I found in a flea market a kind of fabric made with metal. I think it was copper. And that was fantastic to use for another version of *The Weaver*. In this case, ideas come to you because you find the material first. For instance, with *The Weaver*, I found in a store an amazing fabric all wonderfully embroidered that, when it is included in the installation, the small figurine (the weaver) seems to have produced. It's interesting, because people think that I made the figurines and that I made the fabric.

LC— But both of them are just . . .

LP— . . . found objects. I just create the situation.

LC— *The Weaver* is usually a female character.

LP— Hmm, that's true. I never found a male weaver.

LC— That's interesting.

LP— Well, actually, I never found the weaver! The weaver is a sitting woman, and I added the . . . how do you call them?



FIG. 35. *Liliana Porter: Other Situations*. Organized by SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA. On view at El Museo del Barrio, New York, September 13, 2018–January 27, 2019. Exhibition view. Courtesy of El Museo del Barrio. Photograph by Martin Seck.



FIG. 36. Liliana Porter, *Tejedora (The weaver)*, 2017. Mixed media. 57.2 × 245.1 × 228.6 cm. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Liliana Porter.

FIG. 37. Liliana Porter, *The Man with an Axe and Other Brief Situations—Venice*, 2017. Mixed media. Dimensions variable. Detail. Pérez Art Museum Miami Collection. Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Liliana Porter.

LC— The hooks, the crochet hooks?

LP— Yes. It's not that I found a weaver. I found a woman sitting. So, thinking of it, I could have made it a man. But it is usually a task attributed to a woman . . . a machoistic prejudice.

LC— The work lets you see the physicality of different tasks that gender roles are sometimes conscripted to. Given that, do you think that the artworks help visualize gender and social discrepancies?

LP— I think so, yes, because it makes you think. Like now, we think why is the sweeping person always a woman (FIG. 38)? There is something unconscious at work here, because there are men who also clean, right? But I didn't find a figurine of a man doing this. The production of figurines mirrors the prejudice of our society.

LC— Continuing that . . . and then the men chopping wood, or chopping that chair, or chopping anything?

LP— Exactly.

LC— It's the men doing those tasks.

LP— Little by little things will change. I think.

LC— I was also thinking about some of the other works you've done, like *Drawing with Plastic Hammer*, and how found objects are used and framed in a way that makes viewers consider them in a different way.

LP— What I liked there is that the drawing of the sickle is in charcoal and crossing it is a toy plastic hammer, but still we recognize the communist symbol, no?

LC— Yeah, hammer and sickle.

LP— Right.

LC— How do you think that the use of wit or absurdity impacts the viewers' response to your work in a situation like that?

LP— I think people also find, sometimes, the humor themselves and relate to that way of



FIG. 38. *Spheres 2012*, Galleria Continua, Le Moulin, France, 2012. Exhibition view (with view of Liliana Porter's *To Clean Up*, 2012. Mixed media. Dimensions variable). Courtesy the artist. Photograph by Liliana Porter.



FIG. 39. Liliana Porter, *Trabajo forzado* (*Forced Labor*) series: *The Great Task*, 2022. Figurine on white chopped wooden platform. Dimensions variable. Pedestal: 31.5 × 38.5 × 86 in. Detail. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

*The Great Task*, 2022

*The Great Task* displays a miniature figurine of a bald man holding an axe. Placed as if he is chopping through the platform he stands on, the figurine is dwarfed by the extensive damage to the platform caused by his suggested actions. By presenting the results of an act of destruction, Porter provides a critical look at the history of art, making visible the destruction that remained beyond the frame in painterly works such as Lucio Fontana's series of *Concetto spaziale* (*Spatial concepts*, 1950–1968). Fontana's iconic mid-century slashed canvases have been considered among the most emblematic gestures of avant-garde painting. Consequently, Porter's miniature figurine chopping away at the platform presents a poignant feminist critique of the gendered "foundations" of modernist painting. By using a figurine represented with rolled-up sleeves and modest clothes, Porter further challenges the viewer to consider the tensions between labor, class, and power within a broader social context.

understanding, of presenting the work in a way that is humorous and serious at the same time. I think, maybe, it is there for the viewers to perceive.

LC— Is it a sort of strategy to invite them to look at these wrought issues in a different way?

LP— Well, the strategies happen naturally. Maybe that's the way I perceive things, my way of dealing with reality that includes humor as a way of making things a little lighter.

#### MEDIUMS

LC— *The Great Task* and *To Clean Up Again* are mixed-media installations. You've also worked in many other mediums: works on paper and canvas, prints, photographs, public art, film, and theater. So, are there mediums you are interested in revisiting?

LP— I'm still working in all those mediums. Sometimes you have an idea, and it was with a certain medium rather than another, one that works better. Or they might work in different ones, so I'll try the same idea in different mediums. I work still in printmaking and in many other mediums. In all of them, because I think every idea has a solution that is more suitable. I start from the idea, and then I look for the medium. The formal solution is after the idea.

LC— Do you sometimes experiment in multiple mediums?

LP— Yes.

LC— I know that you photograph these figurines, but for the Focus Gallery we are going to be showing the film *Actualidades / Breaking News* (FIGS. 41–49) How has using film or video as a medium shifted your work?

LP— How I started? The first video I did was called *For You* (FIG. 40). The idea came because I have a toy that plays the cymbals. When you wind it up, you hear the noise of the instrument; when it stops, the silence after it is wonderful. But you

won't perceive the silence if you don't have the noise before. The only way you can convey that would be in a video, because in a photograph it's impossible—you need the sound. So, video came because I needed movement and sound. Then when I started to do video, suddenly I realized a lot of new possibilities and ideas.

LC— What was your process, and did you have any unexpected challenges when switching over from still photographs to the moving image?

LP— One of the things that happened was that, in general, my photographs of my objects are the size of the objects. In the video, the size was enormous. In the beginning I didn't know if I liked it. And then I realized that it doesn't matter how big it appears, because in your brain, when you see a hand, you imagine it as the size of a hand; you don't think it's the hand of a giant. You translate it to the real size, which is interesting. So that was one challenge. Another thing when you do a film is that you work with a team of different people who have different tasks. It was fantastic to work as a team.

LC— When you would work as a team, would you be the director?

LP— Right. I know exactly what I want. Then, it is



FIG. 40. Liliana Porter, *For You. Dialogues*, 1999. Video. 15:48 minutes. Courtesy of the artist. Screen capture.



FIG. 41. *Más Situaciones I*: Liliana Porter, Gary R. Libby Focus Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.



FIG. 42. *Más Situaciones I*: Liliana Porter, Gary R. Libby Focus Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

easy to say if something is okay or not—if the light is “correct,” for instance—because, in general, my photographs always have the same kind of light, so I know how the light has to be. It was interesting, the first time I did a film. The filmmaker (the technician) was saying, “This is not film,” because the scenes were very still, nothing was “really happening.” And I said, “It doesn’t matter what you call it; this is what I want.” So they had to adjust a little bit to my view. It was difficult, in general, for the filmmaker to keep the camera still, and I would explain that, if you move it too much, you are creating a person looking at it, and I want the viewer to be the one doing the movement.

LC— Given your interest in exploring the medium of video, do you see that as a continuation of your previous works? A break from previous works?

LP— I think it is like a new branch. Well, not so new. I did the video *For You* in 1999, a long time ago. But it was a work parallel to other works in other mediums. I just finished a new video together with Ana Tiscornia. We work very well together.

LC— When will you show that one?

LP— That one we are going to show for the first time in Uruguay.

LC— We talked about the figurines moving. Is early film, like stop-motion film, a reference for you? Can you name any specific references that are relevant to your work with film?

LP— Not really. I don’t know who I was copying. [laughs]

LC— Just translating new ideas?

LP— No, it’s true, sometimes it just happens . . . that you repeat something that was super done, and you didn’t know. Ignorance it’s called. [laughs]

LC— But then everyone else can make the connections later on.

LP— Yeah.

## BORGES

LC— You begin the film with a quotation attributed to Jorge Luis Borges: “When there is nothing on earth that forgetfulness does not fade, memory alter, and when no one knows what sort of image the future may translate into.” What made you decide to begin this way?

LP— Well, I love that phrase, because it talks about our relationship with things and how we are in a way the creator of meaning, no? And how nothing is definite. I think it’s very open and ambiguous enough that people can meditate reading that phrase in different ways.

LC— It’s a good way to just set the stage and the framework for the beginning. You mentioned how Borges has been very influential for you. Do you think starting with this quotation makes people start thinking about him?

LP— Borges, I think, is a super-intelligent writer. I am very interested in the subjects that are recurrent in his writings, like the concept of time and the subject of representation. I love, for instance, that he is telling you a story and suddenly he makes a comment about the grammar and in that way he brings you back from fiction to reality; it makes you aware that there was a person writing the text. I sometimes say that I feel that my work is like looking at a film with the lights on. You cannot really give in totally to the illusion of the screen, and you cannot be on this side either. So, there is an ambiguity between reality and fiction, no? I think Borges plays a lot with that, and he does it with a lot of humor. So, I feel very connected to him. I once said that the ultimate goal for me would be to create visual situations the way Borges does as a writer, which would be a super ambitious goal.

LC— In the film there’s camerawork: you have close-ups, medium shots, jump shots, as well as objects that appear multiple times, which

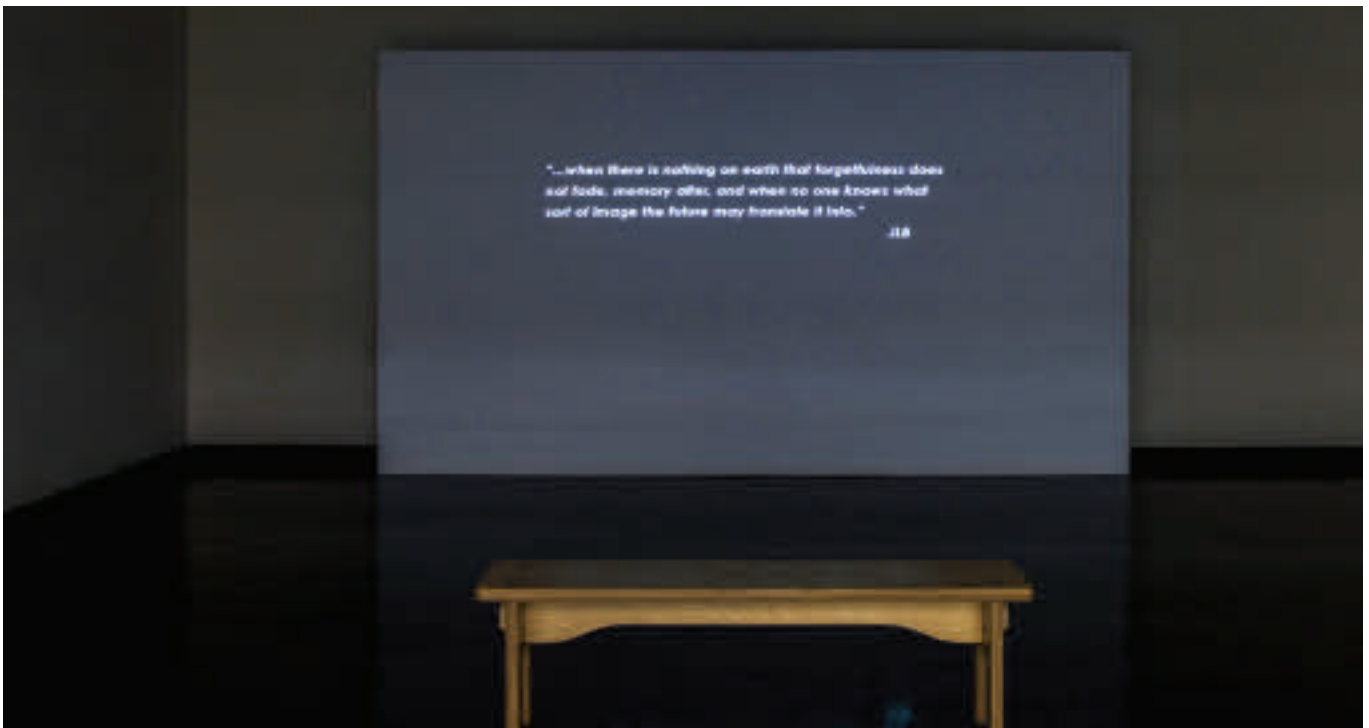


FIG. 43. *Más Situaciones I*: Liliana Porter, Gary R. Libby Focus Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

FIG. 44. Liliana Porter, *Actualidades / Breaking News*, 2016. Screen capture. Digital video. 22 min.



could imply a larger narrative. Do you think your use of film creates a fabricated chronicle that is constructing a narrative that blurs the line between a story of fiction and reality? Perhaps something similar to Borges's use of docufiction?

LP— I hope so!

LC— Did you intend to have the film set in these segments that read as a newspaper?

LP— Ahh, what happened is that in *Actualidades* (the title came after the work is completed), I realized that the structure of the news was perfect for me, because it is fragmented, dissimilar information. You may read about sports and then about somebody who killed somebody, and then politics and the weather. They're fragmented things, which is something I like. So, it was perfect for me to use the structure of the news to make the video. I think also that the various titles of each piece help you contextualize what you are going to see. So, it's a great way to lead the viewer.

LC— I was wondering if you think there's a crescendo or if you just think the scenes are more static and individualized as you move through the film.

LP— Well, I think the editing stage is when you create that kind of strange narrative. Because, if you think of reality, reality is totally fragmented. Let's say you may be doing this, and you sit down and say, "Oh, I forgot to buy eggs" or "I didn't call Maria," and at the same time you say, "Oh oh, my feet hurt." There are many things happening at the same time.

LC— Layers.

LP— The layers of things that are simultaneous. There is not really a thread. Also, think about our perception of reality. You say a chair, but a chair looking from which point of view? Borges wrote about this Chinese scholar who couldn't believe that a dog looking from the front could have the same name as a dog looking from the back. And

then you start thinking of language like that, and it's true! It's a totally arbitrary system. Or when René Magritte made the paintings in which he changes the name of things. You realize that there is a distance between the name and the object. The name is a convention, like the dictionary is a convention. It has nothing to do with objectivity or truth.

LC— Yes, there is no truth.

LP— Exactly, yeah. We are so philosophical!

[laughter]

LC— Maybe being in all this nature is helping us think [laughs]. When you began the editing process and started to figure out the order, were there any scenes that took you in a different direction than you were anticipating?

LP— Sometimes it happens. You have to take things away, and it may change the meaning when you do it. It's always something unexpected. And then the music, you can change a lot with the music. The first time I did *For You*, somebody said, "wait until you do the music." And then someone recommended Sylvia Meyer, who is the musician I work with all the time now. And it's true, the music totally changes your perception of what you see.



FIG. 45. Liliana Porter, *Actualidades / Breaking News*, 2016. Digital video. 22 min. Screen capture.



FIG. 46. *Más Situaciones I*: Liliana Porter, Gary R. Libby Focus Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries.  
Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

FIG. 47. Liliana Porter, *Actualidades / Breaking News*, 2016.  
Digital video. 22 min. Screen capture.

LC— Do you give direction, like if you want it to be serious? Or do you let her have artistic freedom?

LP— When we started, I didn't know what to tell her. So she said, "Don't worry. Give me the video, I'll do something, and, if you don't like it, don't worry." So, then when she finished, I realized for the first time what things I liked or what I did not like. For instance, there was somebody walking, and I didn't want the sound to correspond exactly to the action. I wanted the opposite. I realized then I did not want the music to be literal. Or sometimes the music will be so powerful that the visual doesn't make sense. All those things you realize and learn little by little. It's interesting. So now that we work together so much with Sylvia, it is very easy and fun to work together.

LC— She kind of gets it? So, this is like teamwork?

LP— And she comes up with ideas much better than I, I think.

LC— It makes sense, because everyone has their specific talents.

LP— Exactly.

LC— To wrap up the conversation, what would you hope for a viewer to take away when seeing *The Great Task, To Clean Up Again*, and *Actualidades* as part of the same exhibition program?

LP— Well, I always want the viewer to be happy, no? I remember I had a big show in Buenos Aires, and I said to the curator, "Anything you want, but what I would like is that people feel comfortable and understand." I don't want to be one of those artists who want to be incomprehensible. I like to be as clear as possible, and I prefer if the viewer leaves happy. Like with a present.

LC— They definitely come away thinking, even if they don't come away happy. It's very clear in a lot of ways. There's so many layers to your art and so many ways you can pull out different meanings. It rewards close looking. Is there anything else

you would like to share about the exhibition or our conversation before we close?

LP— Well, I think every time there's an opportunity to show the work, I'm happy, because I like very much to share the ideas and experiences. So, I'm grateful that I was invited to do this and to do this interview.

LC— Thank you. I really appreciate you taking the time.

This conversation was originally recorded and transcribed. It has been edited for clarity and length.



FIG. 48. Liliana Porter, *Actualidades / Breaking News*, 2016. Screen capture. Digital video. 22 min.



FIG. 49. Liliana Porter, *Actualidades / Breaking News*, 2016. Screen captures. Digital video. 22 min.



FIG. 50. *Más Situaciones I: Liliana Porter*, Gary R. Libby Focus Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

## *Más Situaciones I*

*Más Situaciones I* (FIG. 50) presents the digital video *Actualidades* (2016) by Liliana Porter. Divided into thirty segments or vignettes, the film's scenes are arranged like a newspaper with intertitles that announce the theme of the vignette to follow: "local time," "tourism," "domestic violence," "world news," and so on. Key here is that the film's main protagonists stem from the artist's extensive collection of bric-a-brac, knickknacks, and souvenirs. In the course of the thirty segments, viewers see objects as varied as a mass-produced Elvis bust and rotary telephone, miniatures of political figures, and a multicolor teddy bear.

Porter constructs the majority of her scenes on a white background, thus focusing attention on the figures, while her use of close-ups, medium shots, and nonlinear sequences draw the viewer's attention to the figurines, objects, and their curious combinations. The kitschy quality of the objects comes together with the "news" in various ways. Some vignettes capture mundane everyday situations and present images of pop culture icons, while others linger on printed images of war or stage scenes that evoke aggression, as when miniature figurines are placed to raise the issue of violence against women.

Sylvia Meyers's music complements the film's segments, leading the viewer through its moments of compassion, empathy, humor, and shock. Listeners might recognize some elements of the soundtrack, including the Italian protest song "Bella ciao" and Marlene Dietrich's "Lili Marleen." Coupled with Porter's seemingly simple scenes, the music amplifies each vignette's impact, capturing the array of human experiences condensed in Porter's fictional worlds. The pseudo-narratives, unconventional protagonists, artfully composed music, and segmented format coexist as the key foundations of this compelling film.

LAURA COLKITT



**MÁS SITUACIONES II: SIGFREDO CHACÓN**  
ON VIEW: CURATORIAL STUDIES AND THE ISLAA ARTIST INITIATIVE  
CURATED BY HELENA CHEN  
NOVEMBER 4 - DECEMBER 3, 2022

FIG. 51. *Más Situaciones II: Sigfredo Chacón*, Gary R. Libby University Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville, 2022. Exhibition view. Courtesy University Galleries. Photograph by McKinna Anderson.

## Más Situaciones II

*Más Situaciones II* (FIG. 51) presents a selection of works by Sigfredo Chacón, capturing shifts from the conceptual to the more overtly political in his practice. Chacón's original *Situaciones* (Situations, 1972) exhibition at the Ateneo de Caracas is here presented in documentary photographs. One sees how the artist displayed seemingly casual arrangements of fabrics hung by ropes on the wall or looped over a toppled pedestal. Chacón approached painting as an "object" by elevating unprimed canvas to the status of a final work that stands in for the "idea" of painting. In so doing, Chacón criticized the dominant aesthetic of kinetic art in Venezuela, which at the time was characterized by a calculated, hard-edge, geometric abstraction and optical appeal.

Chacón emigrated to Miami in June 2017, and in this new environment he made conspicuous changes for the 2018 version of *Situaciones*, which was featured in his solo exhibition at Miami Biennale in 2018 and is in part recreated here. With its serial presentation of olive-green canvases, each suspended by a rope, the work conjures military force and execution by hanging. On the gallery floor, the artist has added a pile of white canvas bags with the word ANONIMO (anonymous) in uppercase letters, referencing body bags and the Venezuelan government's slaughtering of innocent people. In conjuring the violence of contemporary Venezuela, Chacón's 2018 version of *Situaciones* can be related to the practices of other artists working under dictatorships, such as Arturo Barrio's *Trouxas ensangüentadas* (Bloody bundles, 1970), which references the tortured remains of the "disappeared" in Brazil.

Finally, the exhibition presents three paintings from Chacón's *Fornowpainting* series (2018–2019). Painted in army green with red lines that recall the modernist grid and crosshairs, the surfaces allude to the visuality of authoritarianism. On each canvas a lone stenciled word—MOMENTS, PEOPLE, INVADER—remains visible.<sup>1</sup>

By showcasing the 1972 and 2018 *Situaciones* and the *Fornowpainting* series, the exhibition demonstrates how Chacón's practice, thanks to the artist's use of color, language, and materials, is both supremely conceptual and imbued with broader reflections on how politics and the experience of exile can inhabit conceptually driven painting.

HELENA CHEN

1. Hugo Chávez pronounced the words "Por ahora" (For now) when he was captured after a military coup attempt in 1992 when he was part of the Venezuelan army. Those words continue to resonate in the current political situation in Venezuela.



SIGFREDO CHACÓN (b. Caracas, 1950) is an artist and graphic designer based in Miami. He is considered a part of Latin American art's post-conceptualist generation and has been actively exhibiting his work in Venezuela and abroad since the late 1960s. Chacón has also been a professor of graphic design since 1977. His solo exhibitions include *Situaciones* (Situations), Ateneo de Caracas, Caracas (1972); *Dibujos y pinturas recientes* (Recent drawings and paintings), Sala RG, Caracas (1989); *Sigfredo Chacón*, Luis Perez Galeria, Bogotá, Colombia (1991); *Pinturas parlantes* (Speaking paintings), Museo Jacobo Borges, Caracas (1995); *Sigfredo Chacón*, Centro Cultural Corp Group, Caracas (2000); *Do you copy?*, Periférico Caracas / Arte Contemporáneo, Caracas (2009); *Drawings?*, KaBe Contemporary Art, Miami (2012), and Henrique Faria Fine Art, New York (2021). In 1993, his work was included in the group exhibitions *CCS-10 / Arte venezolano actual* (Current Venezuelan art), Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas; *Al sur del sur* (South of the south), Salas Nacionales de Cultura, Buenos Aires; and the III Bienal Internacional de Pintura de Cuenca, Museo de Arte Moderno, Cuenca. He participated in *Mesótica: The América non-representativa*, Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, San José de Costa Rica, in 1995 and in the I Bienal de Artes Visuales del Mercosur, Porto Alegre, in 1997. From 1999 to 2018 he took part in the Segunda Bienal Internacional de Arte, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; *Correspondences: Contemporary Art from the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros*, Beard and Weil Galleries, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts; *Jump Cuts—Venezuelan Contemporary Art*, Colección Mercantil, Americas Society, New York; *Dirty Geometry*, Mana Contemporary, Miami; Messages from a New America: 10th Mercosur Biennial, Porto Alegre; and *Convergencia / Divergencias* (Convergence / Divergences), Juan Carlos Maldonado Art Collection, Miami.

Chacón studied at the Escuela Técnica de Artes Visuales Cristóbal Rojas in Caracas from 1963 to 1966. From 1966 to 1970 he studied at the Instituto de Diseño Neumann, also in Caracas, graduating as a graphic designer. He completed postgraduate studies in England at the Chelsea School of Art and Design (1973–1974) and the London College of Printing, where he obtained a certificate in advanced typographic design CATD (1974–1975). He was the head of the graphic design, photography, and publications departments at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas from 1976 to 1987. While residing in Caracas, he was professor and chair of graphic and typographical design at the Instituto de Diseño Neumann from 1977 to 1985; professor and coordinator together with Nedo M.F. of the graphic design workshop at the Escuela Técnica de Artes Visuales Cristóbal Rojas (1985/1986); and cofounder of Prodiseño, Escuela de Comunicación Visual y Diseño Gráfico. From 2001 to 2002, he was a professor in the graphic design department of the Universidad José María Vargas and from 2002 to 2003 was a professor in postgraduate studies at the Instituto Universitario de Estudios Superiores de Artes Plásticas Armando Reverón. The recipient of numerous awards and honors, Chacón's work is represented in national and international museums and public and private collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; Museo de Arte Moderno, Santafé de Bogotá; Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection; Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros; Jimmy Belilty Collection; and Carolina and Fernando Eseverri Collection.

See also <https://www.sigfredochacon.com/>.

LILIANA PORTER (b. Argentina, 1941) works across mediums, including printmaking, painting, drawing, photography, video, installation, theater, and public art. Porter began showing her work in 1959 and has since participated in more than 450 exhibitions in forty countries. Recent solo shows include exhibitions at El Museo de Barrio, New York; Perez Art Museum, Miami; Luciana Brito Galeria, São Paulo; Art Omi, Ghent, New York; Savannah College of Art and Design; Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo; Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Franklin Rawson, San Juan, Argentina; Museo de Arte de Zapopan, Guadalajara; Sicardi Gallery, Houston; Barbara Krakow Gallery, Boston; and mor charpentier, Paris. Porter's work was featured in the traveling exhibition *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985* at the Brooklyn Museum, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and Pinacoteca de São Paulo (2017–2018). In 2017, Porter's work was included in *Viva Arte Viva* (Long live live art), La Biennale di Venezia, 57th International Art Exhibition in Italy, and she debuted *Domar al león y otras dudas* (Tame the lion and other doubts), her third theatrical production in June 2017 at the 2nd Bienal de Performance, Parque de la Memoria, Buenos Aires.

Additionally, Porter's work has been exhibited at El Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano, Buenos Aires; and in New York at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the New Museum. The artist's works are held in public and private collections, among them the TATE Modern, London; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museo de Bellas Artes, Santiago, Chile; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogota; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich.

Monographs include *Liliana Porter in Conversation with Inés Katzenstein* (2013); *Liliana Porter: El hombre con el hacha y otras situaciones breves* by Graciela Speranza (2017); *Liliana Porter: The Enemy e outros olhares oblíquos* by Montejo Navas (2011); *Liliana Porter: Fotografía y ficción* by Inés Katzenstein (2003); *Liliana Porter: Obra gráfica, 1964–1990* by Mari Carmen Ramirez (1991); and *Liliana Porter and the Art of Simulation* by Florencia Bazzano-Nelson (2008). Additionally, her work is featured in *The New York Graphic Workshop: 1964–1970* curated by Gabriel Perez-Barreiro and Ursula Davila-Villa (2009); *From Conceptualism to Feminism: Lucy Lippard's Numbers Shows 1969–74* by Cornelia Butler (2012); and many more. Porter studied at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires and at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City before moving to New York, where in 1964 she cofounded the New York Graphic Workshop with artists Luis Camnitzer and Jose Guillermo Castillo. Porter was recognized with a 2016 Premio Universitario de Cultura 400 Años award from the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba; a 1980 Guggenheim Fellowship; three New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowships (1985, 1996, 1999); the Mid-Atlantic/NEA Regional Fellowship (1994); and seven PSC-CUNY research awards (from 1994 to 2004). She was a professor at Queens College, CUNY, until 2007.

See also <http://lilianaporter.com/artist>.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

KAIRA M. CABAÑAS is professor in art history and an affiliate faculty member in the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida, Gainesville. She is the author of multiple volumes, including *Immanent Vitalities: Meaning and Materiality in Modern and Contemporary Art* (2021), which received the Frank Jewett Mather Award from the College Art Association; and *Learning from Madness: Brazilian Modernism and Global Contemporary Art* (2018). She is currently at work on a book titled *Deviant Art Histories: From Radical Psychiatry to Cultural Citizenship*. In March 2023, she assumes the position of associate dean for academic programs and publications at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

HELENA CHEN is a doctoral candidate studying Chinese antiquarianism in the University of Florida's art history program. Her secondary area is the history of photography. Her dissertation, tentatively titled "From Paper to Bronze and Back Again: Forging Ancient Chinese Bronzes, c. 1820s–1930s," explores the construction of antiquarian knowledge in relation to printed catalogs, markets, and taste, through the lens of bronze forgery. Helena received her bachelor's in history from Soochow University, Taiwan, and a master's in art history from the University of Florida. She has worked as the Bishop White Committee Intern for the East Asian Art Department of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, and has also participated in the Mellon Chinese Object Study Workshops at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art and the Art Institute of Chicago.

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LAURA R. COLKITT is a doctoral candidate studying modern and contemporary art in the University of Florida's art history program. Laura received her bachelor's from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's in art history from the University of South Florida. She is the recipient of several fellowships and academic awards, including the Rothman Doctoral Fellowship, Grinter Fellowship, and Jerry Cutler Graduate Student Travel Award at the University of Florida. Her research explores the hybridity of cultures in the global age. Her forthcoming dissertation, "In between Relations: Liliana Porter's Art," aims to track a constellation of concerns that inform the contemporary art practice of Liliana Porter.

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JESÚS FUENMAYOR is a curator with more than thirty years of experience focused on international modern and contemporary art. At present he is the program director and curator of the University Galleries of the University of Florida, Gainesville. From 2017 to 2019 he was the chief curator for the 14th Cuenca International Biennial in Cuenca, Ecuador. Previously, he held positions as director and curator of the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation in Miami (2012–2015) and as director and curator of Periférico Caracas (2005–2011). He is the curator of the exhibition *Plural Domains: Selected Works from the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation Collection* (Harn Museum of Art / University Galleries, Gainesville, Florida, 2021–2022; Museo de Arte de Zapopan, Guadalajara, Mexico, 2022) and author of *Accumulate, Classify, Preserve, Display: Roberto Obregón Archive from the Carolina and Fernando Eseverri Collection* (2021). Among his other publications are *Living Structures / Art as Plural Experience*, catalog to the 14th Cuenca Biennial (2019); and *Sigfredo Chacón: Crossings* (2021).

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WORKS IN EXHIBITION

EXHIBITION: *Painting Situations:  
Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter*

*Sigfredo Chacón*

*All works are from the Sigfredo Chacón  
Art Foundation Collection.*

*The London Drawings series: amarillo (yellow)*  
1974 / 2022  
Acrylic on paper  
16.5 × 30.75 in.

*The London Drawings series: azul (blue)*  
1974 / 2022  
Acrylic on paper  
16.5 × 15.375 in.

*The London Drawings series: rojo (red)*  
1974 / 2022  
Acrylic on paper  
16.5 × 15.375 in.

*The London Drawings series: rojo primario (primary red)*  
1974 / 2022  
Acrylic on paper  
16.5 × 15.375 in.

*The London Drawings series: blanco (white)*  
1974 / 2022  
Acrylic on paper  
16.5 × 15.375 in.

*The London Drawings series: negro (black)*  
1974 / 2022  
Acrylic on paper  
16.5 × 15.375 in.

*Pinturasparlantes, rojo*  
(Speaking-paintings, red)  
1995 / 2022  
Acrylic on wood  
6 × 20 ft

*Pinturasparlantes, negro*  
(Speaking-paintings, black)  
1995 / 2022  
Acrylic on wood  
6 × 20 ft

*Pinturasparlantes, segunda versión, blanco*  
(Speaking-paintings, second version, white)  
1974 / 2018  
Acrylic on canvas  
18 × 18 in. each

*Liliana Porter*

*All works are from Liliana Porter's collection.*

*Trabajo forzado (Forced Labor) series: The Great Task*  
2022  
Figurine on white chopped wooden platform  
Dimensions variable. Pedestal: 31.5 × 38.5 × 86 in.

*Trabajo forzado (Forced Labor) series: To Clean Up Again*  
2022  
Figurine and sand on white platform  
Dimensions variable. Pedestal: 31.5 × 27.5 × 164 in.

EXHIBITION: *Más Situaciones I:*  
*Liliana Porter*

*Actualidades / Breaking News*  
2016

Digital video, 22 min.

Conceived & directed by Liliana Porter

Music: Sylvia Meyer

Codirection: Ana Tiscornia

Videography and Editing: Federico Lo Bianco

EXHIBITION: *Más Situaciones II:*  
*Sigfredo Chacón*  
*All works are from the Sigfredo Chacón*  
*Art Foundation Collection.*

*Fornowpainting series: Moments*  
2018–2019  
Acrylic and crayon on canvas  
30.125 × 30.125 in.

*Fornowpainting series: People*  
2018–2019  
Acrylic and crayon on canvas  
30.125 × 30.125 in.

*Fornowpainting series: Invader*  
2018–2019  
Acrylic and crayon on canvas  
30.125 × 30.125 in.

*Situaciones (Situations) series*  
1972 / 2018  
Digital print on paper  
10 photographs, 10 × 14 in. each

*Situaciones (Situations) series*  
1972 / 2018  
Mixed media  
Dimensions variable

*Situaciones (Situations) series*  
1972 / 2018  
Mixed media  
Dimensions variable

*Situaciones (Situations) series*  
1972 / 2018  
Mix media  
Dimensions variable

*Anónimo (Anonymous) series*  
1971 / 2018  
Mix media  
Dimensions variable

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research and writing for this catalog and the eponymous exhibition were made possible with the financial support of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) through the ISLAA Artist Seminar Initiative, which supports academic institutions in fostering exchanges between students and living artists from Latin America. We are extremely grateful to Ariel Aisiks, founder and president of ISLAA, for his vision and dedication to centering the art of Latin America and its diaspora, as well as for his unwavering commitment to partnering with public universities. To the ISLAA staff, in particular Mercedes Cohen, Lucy Hunter, and Blanca Serrano Ortiz de Solórzano, we owe a special thanks for shepherding this collaboration between ISLAA and the University of Florida's School of Art + Art History (SA+AH) and University Galleries (UG) from start to finish with such diligence and enthusiasm.

At the University of Florida, we are indebted to Onye Ozuzu, dean of the College of the Arts, for her vision and faith in what the arts can do and for the additional research support awarded for the ISLAA Artist Seminar Initiative and exhibition. Director of SA+AH Elizabeth Ross has been a steadfast supporter of this collaboration, championing its positive impact for our school's curriculum and students. Dianne Caple, with her characteristic professionalism, offered additional administrative support. At University Galleries, we thank Jorge Bernal for his careful work attending to the exhibition's installation, as well as art installer Thomas Aycock. Costanza González and Ana Tiscornia also offered invaluable support, both professional and personal, to the artists and to the realization of their participation in this exhibition.

We are grateful to the students in the graduate curatorial seminar / ISLAA Artist Seminar Initiative led by Jesús Fuenmayor—Korinne Casirella, Helena Chen, Laura Colkitt, Minji Ku, Leah Lester, Li Huixin, and Martha Whiteman—for their input and spirit of inquiry. We offer additional thanks to Helena and Laura for their key contributions as curators and authors in this volume. Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation and admiration to the artists, Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter, for their critical interventions in art's histories and for their indefatigable generosity.

*Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter and Más Situaciones I & II* were supported by a grant awarded by the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) through its Artist Seminar Initiative, which, in partnering with academic institutions, aims to foster exchanges between students and living artists from Latin America as well as student participation in the production of public-facing exhibitions. Additional support for the exhibitions and related programs was provided by the University of Florida's University Galleries, School of Art + Art History (SA+AH), the Harn Eminent Scholar Chair in Art History, the Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere (Rothman endowment), and the Center for Latin American Studies. *Más Situaciones I & II* were presented as part of the SA+AH series On View: Curatorial Studies.

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PUBLISHED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE EXHIBITIONS

*Painting Situations: Sigfredo Chacón and Liliana Porter /  
ISLAA Artist Seminar Initiative*

Curated by Jesús Fuenmayor and Kaira M. Cabañas

Gary R. Libby University Gallery

October 12–December 2, 2022

*Más Situaciones I: Liliana Porter*

Curated by Laura Colkitt

Gary R. Libby Focus Gallery

October 12–28, 2022

*Más Situaciones II: Sigfredo Chacón*

Curated by Helena Chen

Gary R. Libby Focus Gallery

November 4–December 2, 2022

PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

October 12, 2022, 5–7 pm

Opening reception, University Galleries

October 21, 2022, 5–6 pm

Exhibition tour of *Painting Situations*  
and *Más Situaciones I* by Laura Colkitt

November 10, 2022, 5–6 pm

Exhibition tour of *Painting Situations* and *Más Situaciones II*  
by Helena Chen

November 16, 2022, 5–6 pm

Exhibition tour of *Painting Situations* by Jesús Fuenmayor

Gary R. Libby University Gallery

November 16, 2022, 6–7 pm

Lecture by Sérgio B. Martins, “Art as Project, Project as Art”

105 Fine Arts Building B



PUBLISHED BY UNIVERSITY GALLERIES

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ISBN 978-1-7363480-0-0

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